

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.841
10 February 2000

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 10 February 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Harald Kreid

(Austria)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 841st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have two speakers inscribed on my list today. I give the floor to the first speaker, who is the Ambassador of Cuba, Ambassador Carlos Amat Fores.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor under your presidency for the first time, allow me to begin my statement by congratulating you sincerely on the work that you have done and to take this opportunity to reiterate my delegation's full support and cooperation in the performance of your task. I extend my congratulations to your predecessor for the work that he did and we also express our readiness to continue cooperating positively with your successor as President. I would also like to thank the secretariat staff and the team of translators and interpreters for the irreplaceable support they give us in accomplishing our work.

We are beginning a new session of the Conference on Disarmament in an international situation that bears no relation to the one which was generated by the most optimistic ideas in the field of disarmament at the beginning of the last decade, ideas which proliferated at the end of the cold war and, following elementary logic, held out, among other things, the possibility of achieving the final and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. I speak of elementary logic because with the end of the cold war it appeared that the cause of the uncontrolled build-up of nuclear arsenals in the world would disappear. Though I must confess that in Cuba we always viewed that optimism with some reservations.

Now everything appears clearer. It is regrettable and deeply disturbing that those optimistic ideas did not reflect the reality in which we have always lived, a reality that is now harshly apparent from various recent events such as, for example, NATO's adoption of a new strategic concept that not only reiterates the foundations of the unacceptable and indefensible doctrine of nuclear deterrence, but also proclaims that organization's right to intervene militarily all over the world, which can lead and has already led to breaches and contraventions of the principles and norms set forth in the United Nations Charter. I could cite other examples which illustrate that dangerous reality, but I prefer to refer to a few of them later.

Mr. President, I do not wish to omit to convey to you the appreciation of my delegation for the efforts you are making to reach an agreement among the members of the Conference on the adoption of a programme of work for this session. In the international situation to which I referred earlier, the role of the Conference on Disarmament is increasing. It is becoming imperative to heed the calls from the international community expressed through the resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, among other forums. For several years resolutions have been adopted in that body requesting the Conference to establish an ad hoc committee on the issue of nuclear disarmament. Last year this Conference was once again asked, in resolution 54/54 P, to establish such a mechanism on a priority basis.

(Mr. Amat Fores, Cuba)

My country reiterates its firm support for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, and that will continue to be my delegation's highest priority in this forum. How can it be claimed that negotiations on nuclear weapons are only a matter for bilateral formats when such weapons threaten the whole of humankind? If nuclear weapons were to be used at some point in the future, be it by conscious decision, faulty operation, accident or miscalculation, they will not discriminate between possessors and non-possessors, between combatants and non-combatants, and nuclear weapons would even be incapable of differentiating between those who, in this beautiful room, favour or oppose the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. In such an unhappy event all of us would suffer the same fate.

Cuba, as a member of the Group of 21, to which it has the honour to belong, has set out its ideas on the programme of work in documents CD/1570 and CD/1571, which contain the Group's position on the matter. These proposals are clear and express the will of the Group of 21 to begin negotiations immediately to eliminate for ever the latent danger represented by the possession of nuclear weapons by certain Powers. Some believe that that position is not realistic, and have even stated that it is out of step with the present. So our delegation asks itself what is real. Perhaps the only possible reality is to pursue negotiations which will lead to new non-proliferation instruments that will perpetuate the discriminatory and unacceptable division between States which possess and those which do not possess nuclear weapons, while new sophisticated arms are developed and advanced technological solutions are sought which will in practice make it possible to improve nuclear weapons, in terms of both quality and quantity.

Perhaps reality in nuclear disarmament means the promotion of the deployment of new anti-missile defence systems that threaten to weaken the present agreements on the control of strategic nuclear weapons and the prospects of further reductions in strategic and tactical nuclear arsenals; or reality means waiting another 30 years or more to see how, in spite of the passage of time, there will have been no "negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control", in the words of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a treaty which, although Cuba does not participate in it, believing it to be a discriminatory instrument which establishes, apparently for ever, two different categories of States, understands the frustrations that many countries feel with the selective way in which, in our opinion, this instrument is applied.

This Conference cannot continue year after year to find itself prevented from beginning negotiations on what remains the highest priority in the field of disarmament - nuclear disarmament, as enshrined among the objectives and priorities laid down by the United Nations in the final declaration and Programme of Action of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which are still fully in force.

The General Assembly of the United Nations, in resolution 54/53, entitled "Prevention of the arms race in outer space", which was adopted with the support of almost all the Members of the United Nations, and, even more significantly, without opposition from any of them, also

(Mr. Amat Fores, Cuba)

reiterates "that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects", and invites the Conference to re-establish an ad hoc committee for this purpose. It is therefore both paradoxical and frustrating that we are not capable of fulfilling the commitments we have entered into vis-à-vis the international community in the very forum it has chosen to begin negotiations on issues related to disarmament and arms control. Of course, it is implicit in my analysis that in order to begin any negotiating exercise it is vital that we should all display the necessary political will and spirit of flexibility if we are to achieve the noble objectives and goals that are urged upon us.

Cuba has always advocated nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This is why all our programmes for the use of nuclear energy are directed to its peaceful exploitation and are placed under safeguards agreements with IAEA. This is the expression shown of our country's and our Government's vocation for peace. Following that vocation, we have recently signed an additional protocol to our safeguards agreements with IAEA, based on the model protocol adopted by that agency. This represents a concrete contribution to a strengthened, efficient and effective international safeguards regime. In so doing Cuba became the first country with INFCIRC/66-type safeguards agreements to sign a protocol of this nature with IAEA.

We would also like to take this opportunity to refer to other important topics in the field of disarmament and arms control which are currently on the table. We are dealing with one of them in a nearby room. I refer to the negotiations on the protocol which is intended to strengthen the Convention on Biological Weapons. Our country is following those negotiations with great interest and is taking an active part in the work of the Ad Hoc Group. We appreciate the progress reached in that forum and stand ready to continue contributing to those negotiations in a positive and constructive manner, so that we can conclude a protocol which is universal and effective before the Fifth Review Conference on the Convention, as decided at the previous Conference.

Secondly, while emphasizing that we attach the highest priority to the issue of nuclear disarmament, Cuba shares the concerns related to the illicit traffic in small arms and supports the initiatives that are being pursued at the bilateral, regional and multilateral level in search of negotiated solutions to this phenomenon. All these initiatives must take into account the particular circumstances and situation of each country or region and avoid the blind application of remedies. A suitable forum to address this set of problems in detail will be the international conference on the illicit arms trade that is due to take place in the year 2001. The scope of the conference must be limited to the illicit aspects of the arms trade, as recommended by the United Nations General Assembly. The Preparatory Committee for the conference will begin its work very soon, and my country is preparing to participate actively in its work in the hope of reaching fruitful results.

(Mr. Amat Fores, Cuba)

Finally, I would like to reiterate the delegation of Cuba's interest in this forum's beginning its substantive work, and in that context, as I have said, we will not support approaches that hide behind a veil of pragmatism and which, in the final analysis, merely respond to certain very limited individual interests. Nor will we support the isolating of, selective approaches to, some subjects at the expense of negotiations on others of equal or greater priority and importance.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Hu Xiaodi.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): The Chinese delegation attaches great importance to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and maintains that the CD should re-establish an ad hoc committee under this agenda item to commence substantive negotiations. My delegation has on many occasions stated this position and tabled a specific proposal in March last year which appeared as document CD/1576. Today, upon the instructions from the Chinese Government, I submit a working paper entitled "China's position on and suggestions for ways to address the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space at the Conference on Disarmament". Yesterday, I requested the Secretary-General to circulate it as an official document of the CD.

I shall briefly outline the main elements of the working paper. There are four parts: our views on how to address the issue of PAROS at the CD, our views on the existing international legal instruments concerning PAROS, China's position on PAROS and tentative ideas on the new international legal instruments.

First, our views on how to address PAROS at the CD. As the single multilateral negotiating body the CD should concentrate on the most pressing and prominent issues that have the greatest bearing on international peace and security in the twenty-first century. PAROS is just such an issue and has every reason to be one of the highest priorities on the CD's agenda.

The United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session once again adopted by an overwhelming majority a resolution on PAROS. The resolution reiterates that the CD has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and invites the CD to re-establish an ad hoc committee as early as possible during this year's session. The fact that no country voted against the resolution amply reflects the common aspiration and strong desire of the international community to prevent an arms race in outer space. In a related move, the General Assembly last year adopted, again by an overwhelming majority, a resolution on preservation of and compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems.

(Mr. Hu, China)

Since the CD put PAROS on its agenda in 1982 it has, through the ad hoc committee and otherwise, conducted useful work on issues such as relevant definitions, principles, existing treaties and confidence-creating measures. Given the present grave situation the CD has every reason to re-establish an ad hoc committee on PAROS and commence substantive work without delay.

Thus the Chinese delegation maintains that as proposed in CD/1576, the CD should re-establish an ad hoc committee under agenda item 3, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", to negotiate and conclude an international legal instrument banning the testing, deployment and use of any weapons, weapon systems and their components in outer space, with a view to preventing the weaponization of outer space.

In carrying out its mandate, the ad hoc committee should take into consideration all relevant present and future developments and specific proposals tabled by all sides. As a preliminary step towards the negotiation and conclusion of international legal instruments, it may also discuss all other relevant issues, such as current military activities and relevant developments and their impact on efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space; the shortcomings of existing international legal instruments; concepts and definitions related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and the basic elements of the future international legal instruments.

The Chinese delegation has taken note of the many ideas and suggestions on PAROS put to the Conference by various parties. We are of the view that the new ad hoc committee should be an open-ended all-embracing mechanism within which all sides can freely express their views. It should be given the negotiation and conclusion of an international legal instrument or instruments on the prevention of the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space as a clear direction and ultimate goal.

Secondly, the issue of the existing international legal instruments. There are several international legal instruments of relevance to the outer space issue, such as the 1963 partial test-ban treaty, the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, and the 1972 ABM Treaty between the United States and the USSR. However, they have been ineffective in preventing the weaponization of outer space or an arms race in outer space. Some have provided for limited prohibitions and contain many loopholes and ambiguities. Some have not been fully complied with or risk being violated, amended or abrogated. Therefore the Chinese delegation believes that the international community, while making efforts to strengthen the existing international legal instruments, also needs to negotiate new international legal instruments to achieve the goal of non-weaponization of and prevention of an arms race in outer space. The new international legal instrument to be concluded should include as basic elements a ban on the testing, deployment and use of any weapon system or components thereof in outer space, and limits on the use of satellites for military purposes.

Thirdly, China's basic position on PAROS. As long ago as in 1985, China submitted to the first ad hoc committee on PAROS a position paper (CD/579) which outlined its basic

(Mr. Hu, China)

positions in this regard. It has always maintained that the exploration and use of outer space should only serve to promote the economic, scientific and cultural development of all countries and benefit all mankind; it has always opposed an arms race of any kind, in outer space or elsewhere. This principled position remains unchanged. We emphasize that the Powers with the greatest space capabilities bear a special responsibility for preventing an arms race in outer space. Countries must undertake not to test, deploy or use any weapon systems or components in space.

Fourthly, tentative ideas on new international legal instruments. For the moment the Chinese delegation believes that the new international legal instruments to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in outer space ought to include purposes, basic obligations, definitions, national implementation measures, international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, verification measures, appropriate measures for the resolution of disputes, transparency measures, and the procedural articles commonly found in international instruments such as articles on amendment, signature, ratification and entry into force. Our working paper gives the main features of these articles, so I will not repeat them here.

The Chinese delegation wishes to emphasize that these are only preliminary ideas that may help inspire thoughts, promote further discussion and consideration in this regard, and facilitate further negotiations. My delegation will actively participate in such discussions and negotiations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement. This concludes the list of speakers for today. Does any delegation want to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

I would therefore now turn to the question of our programme of work. I regret to have to inform you that none of the three options which I submitted in an informal context to the Conference gained unanimous support. The draft declaration which I circulated yesterday morning with regard to the appointment of two special coordinators under decision CD/1036, paragraph 5 (d), did not, for technical reasons, reach all groups in time to be discussed in yesterday's group meetings. In the Presidential consultations held yesterday afternoon, the Coordinator of the G-21 informed me that his group, while maintaining its formal position presented in its statement made in the plenary meeting of 27 January, could accept the appointment of the two special coordinators as a stand-alone decision. In addition, the group made a number of changes to the text, which in the meantime should have been brought to the attention of all delegations.

We are therefore confronted by a new situation. The consultations which I have since conducted have shown - not surprisingly - that several delegations will need to seek new instructions from their capitals and will require to come to a decision. Under these circumstances, I am not in a position to carry the matter any further at this point. Much as I deplore it, I have no choice but to leave it for consideration at a later stage. Although the rule quoted in decision CD/1036 stipulates, or implies, that a decision on the appointment of the special coordinator or coordinators should be taken in the second half of the first presidency of

(The President)

each session, in the one case on record when this rule was applied, in 1991, the appointment was made by the second President of the year's session. My successor, provided that he intends to follow this course and provided he can obtain the support of the Conference, would thus be able to take up, based on this precedent, the same question during his term of office.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor? I see the representative of Mexico. Ambassador de Icaza, you have the floor.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I have listened to your summary of the present situation very carefully and I very much fear that the record may give an impression that it was the attitude of the Group of 21 that prevented a decision being taken on your draft declaration appointing two special coordinators. I am taking the floor to make it absolutely clear that in yesterday's Presidential consultations the coordinator of one group stated that in his group there was no agreement on that draft declaration, that another coordinator said that he had not been able to distribute the draft declaration to all members of his group and that the G 21 was the only one to come up with a positive and constructive response to your proposal.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Mexico and I appreciate his clarification. It was not my intention to create the impression that the problem rests with the Group of 21. I was just pointing out that from them we had received a reply - a positive reply, as I said - with some text amendments which, however, need time to be studied. I have also expressed the view that the process has not come to an end and could be continued by my successor, who will be fully aware of the positions of other groups because they are, I trust, reflected in the reports that reached you from the group coordinators.

I now give the floor to the delegation of the United Kingdom - Ambassador Soutar.

Mr. SOUTAR (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, as this is the first time I have asked for the floor during your presidency, may I begin by expressing the appreciation of my delegation for the energy and determination with which you have performed your crucial role at a particularly challenging time? May I also, with regret, offer the commiseration of my delegation that your efforts on our behalf have not been translated into agreement on a substantive work programme for the Conference?

The United Kingdom finds this state of affairs deeply disappointing. We approached this year's session with the same key objective we have held for a number of years: the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). I was therefore heartened by the report which Ambassador Luck made to the Conference at our first meeting on 18 January, describing the outcome of the inter-sessional consultations he had conducted jointly with you, Mr. President. In that report, he spoke of a strongly dominant sentiment among delegations that the Conference should commence forthwith on a programme of work, and that the informal proposals outlined by Ambassador Dembri last year remained our

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

point of departure. On the same occasion you yourself, Mr. President, made it clear that you too saw the way forward as a search for agreement on the two outstanding issues of nuclear disarmament and outer space.

In your subsequent consultations, you were to bring forward for consideration a number of options, one of which would have permitted the appointment of special coordinators to deal with the issues of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, while allowing the Conference to agree on a work programme, including the establishment of an ad hoc committee for negotiations on an FMCT. This would have at last allowed those States parties to the NPT who are also members of this Conference to fulfil the commitment, set out in the programme of action in the "Principles and objectives" document agreed at the Non-Proliferation (NPT) Review and Extension Conference in 1995, to undertake cut-off negotiations.

Five years on, that common objective remains unfulfilled. The importance of an FMCT has not diminished in the intervening period. Indeed, events in the closing years of the last century have underlined its necessity. In our view, it remains the case that before there can be an effective and verifiable ban on nuclear weapons globally, there must be confidence that no new fissile material for such weapons can be produced. An FMCT would deliver such an assurance, and in so doing, put in place a vital foundation for the achievement of global nuclear disarmament.

The United Kingdom was therefore dismayed when informal consultations revealed that one delegation was no longer prepared to be bound by a commitment solemnly entered into five years ago, making the achievement of consensus on this particular option impossible. Those who try to place obstacles in the way of an FMCT negotiation do nothing to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament, and only call into question the sincerity of their commitment to nuclear disarmament.

Another unfortunate victim of this development is that the Conference has been unable to reappoint a special coordinator or coordinators on the reform issues: review of the agenda, expansion of its membership, and improved and effective functioning.

In informal consultations last week, I made the point that the consensus rule provides an essential safeguard for the interests of individual delegations. But I also said that the consensus rule should not be allowed to become a straitjacket, choking off the possibility of substantive work where there is a real demand for it. Like our distinguished former colleague, Ambassador Péter Náray of Hungary, I begin to fear that the word "consensus" may get a new meaning if the Conference continues the practices we have seen established over the past two years.

The United Kingdom would therefore like to lend its voice to the increasing chorus of delegations who have called for reform of our procedures. I am not so naive as to believe that mere reform of procedures would necessarily of itself lead to accelerated progress on the substantive items of our agenda. Your informal consultations have shown only too clearly how

(Mr. Grey, United States)

dramatically in the nearly 28 years since the ABM Treaty was signed. The threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction using advanced means of delivery is real, growing, and increasingly unpredictable. The spread of these technologies should not have happened, but regrettably it did. Those who allowed it to happen should have known what the consequences would be.

The United States is considering a limited system to defend against such threats. We have made clear that we are committed to work with Russia, in a spirit of cooperation against a threat we both face, to identify adaptations of the ABM Treaty that would make its provisions consistent with a limited national missile defence. Our two countries have amended the ABM Treaty before, and bilateral discussions on START and ABM issues are continuing, including here in Geneva, even as the CD continues to squander its time.

There are reasons to wonder at the source of this criticism. Four of the five nuclear-weapon States have reduced their holdings of these weapons and increased transparency. The other nuclear-weapon State is modernizing its forces and is not increasing its transparency. This same State decided to "test"-fire missiles in 1996 in response to political developments of which it did not approve, and it has been building new missile fields in locations that raise concerns. Yet this State's representatives accuse the United States of practising hegemonism and seeking unilateral security at the expense of the security of other States. And they are calling into question an open, orderly process aimed at finding necessary adaptations that can keep a long-standing arms control agreement relevant and effective.

The United States has a long history in arms control and disarmament. We have negotiated and implemented many agreements and continue to do so. Here in the CD the United States has already shown considerable flexibility on important elements of our programme of work. In the spirit of making practical progress in areas where we know consensus exists, it is time for other CD members to show similar flexibility. If the CD does not get down to work, it will confirm my authorities' suspicions that this is because some governments do not want it to work.

The United States supports the efforts your delegation will be making, Madam President, to reach consensus on the CD's programme of work. We are ready to work closely with you, and if necessary, with your successors, to create the conditions that will allow the Conference to resume negotiations on FMC. Conducting negotiations is the CD's main business, and the world at large will judge our success or failure by how well we do that job.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Grey for his statement and also for the kind words he addressed to the Chair and for his words of support.

This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? This does not seem to be the case.

(The President)

I should now like to take up for a decision the request from Armenia to participate as an observer in the work of the Conference during this session, without first considering it at an informal plenary meeting. This request is contained in document CD/WP.508, which is before you. May I take it that the Conference agrees to this request?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 24 February 2000, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

the road to progress can be blocked in the absence of the necessary political commitment. But I would recall the words of the distinguished Ambassador of Chile who told us last year that even in unpromising external circumstances, the Conference could emerge from its state of paralysis. He went on to suggest some simple modifications to our operating procedures which, without altering the current procedural framework, would nonetheless allow the Conference to carry out some ground-breaking work to prepare for eventual negotiations.

The regrettable failure of the consultative process which you had launched on the work programme, Mr. President, strongly suggests to my delegation that there would be merit in taking up the ideas put forward by the Ambassador of Chile, and my delegation would be prepared to work on these and other ideas with like-minded delegations, even if for the time being progress on the substantive items of our work programme remains blocked. I would suggest that this would be a modest but unmistakable signal that some members of the Conference at least are prepared to try to live up to the responsibilities laid upon the Conference by the international community.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Soutar for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of Romania, Ambassador Maxim.

Mr. MAXIM (Romania) (translated from French): As you announced just now, Mr. President, it is true that our Mission was cut off from the world yesterday morning because of a technical fault which prevented us from receiving communications and even from sending communications to other missions. Thanks to the secretariat we were able to catch up, and yesterday evening we were in a position to send to our colleagues who are members of the Eastern European group the text which you distributed yesterday as well as the text that was prepared by the Group of 21. This morning we were able to discuss these two texts briefly. I am in a position to tell you that the Eastern European group is in principle in agreement with the two proposals. The group would certainly have needed to discuss things in more detail, but given the situation you referred to just now, apparently we will no longer have time to talk together about this matter. Nevertheless, as I said, in a spirit of flexibility and cooperation, the members of our group have given their agreement in principle and wish to cooperate and contribute further in order to arrive at a generally acceptable solution.

I would like to take this opportunity, Sir, to thank you yet again for the efforts which you have been making during your term of office to arrive at a solution, and I would also like to assure the incoming President of cooperation on the part of the members of our group.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Maxim for his statement. I congratulate you on the manner in which you caught up with the information and conveyed it to your group and came to a very positive reaction, for which I also want to thank the Group through its Coordinator.

I now have on my list the Ambassador of France.

Mr. de la FORTELLE (France) (translated from French): I, too, wish to thank you very much, in my turn, Mr. President, for all the efforts you have made during your term of office - many repeated efforts which showed great force of character and intelligence. My delegation is all the sorer, then, to see that it is highly likely that these efforts will lead nowhere. I do not think there is any point in trying to blame anybody. What I would like to do is to assure you of my delegation's good will. Adopting what might be called option 4, involving simply the appointment of two special coordinators on nuclear disarmament and space, is far from ideal, and far from satisfactory to my delegation, because, as a previous speaker said, that option takes no account of the priority attached to the FMCT. To pay tribute yet again to your efforts and try to give them a specific follow-up, let me say two things. On the one hand, my delegation is prepared to accept your initial draft declaration, and secondly, if divergences on that declaration due to other groups, or another group, cannot be overcome, it might perhaps be possible to do without a declaration and, drawing on your prerogatives, to designate two special coordinators before the end of your tenure without a declaration, or else with a minimum declaration involving a simple reference to document CD/1036, paragraph 5 (d), and then give your opinion on how long the mission of these two coordinators might last and how often they might report to the Conference on Disarmament. Maybe this could still offer a way out - I very much hope so, and in any event I thank you once again and convey to you every good wish until the last day of your term of office.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador de la Fortelle for his statement and I interpret it as support to the presidency, for which I am very grateful. Unfortunately, I have had to accept that the trend of the Conference is not exactly to expand the role and the competence of the President but to limit them as much as possible by an interpretation of the rules which is going in favour of the Conference as such and the consensus rule. I think Ambassador Soutar in his statement before pointed out the situation, which I personally also believe is very unfortunate because the little movement and headway we could make with the help of the presidency is hampered to a large extent by these developments.

I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Germany.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): In the course of the first plenary session this year, in conjunction with the adoption of the agenda, my delegation already expressed misgivings and concern about the manner in which the Conference is conducting its business. Our protracted procedural squabbles have contributed nothing to dispelling these misgivings. While it is legitimate that delegations may have different interpretations of the rules of procedure, we must nevertheless not forget that rules of procedure are there to facilitate our work and not to complicate it. Against this backdrop, we appreciate and commend your efforts, Mr. President, to overcome differences and to move us forward to substantive work.

I think the first step we should be able to take is at least to reappoint the special coordinators and all of them on which agreement already existed last year. As I mentioned earlier and other delegations as well, these are, among others, on transparency in armaments, on APMs, but also on the reform of the Conference and on the agenda. We have in our decision on the agenda a reference to consultations on review, and I wonder when these consultations will

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

take place if we do not have the instruments to carry out these consultations. So I would hope that at our next meeting we will be able to re-establish the special coordinators as a first step - and this would be perfectly in harmony with paragraph 5 (d) of CD/1036 - and then move on to further substantive discussions.

My delegation, like the United Kingdom delegation, is strongly committed to the purposes of this Conference and also to the "Principles and objectives" and the programme established therein, and I would do everything in order fulfil this commitment. I hope that we will muster the political will and determination to move this Conference out of the existing stalemate.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): On the issue of the programme of work, I would like to make the following comments. Since this is an official meeting, my comments are for the record. First of all, China considers that the CD should respond to the demands placed upon it by the General Assembly and respond to the hope and aspirations of the international community. In other words, it should embark on negotiations on PAROS and nuclear disarmament. Under the circumstances, we also need to begin negotiations on the FMCT.

The Chinese delegation considers it regrettable that because some delegations refuse to negotiate on PAROS and nuclear disarmament we cannot agree on the programme of work.

If we are obliged to designate special coordinators, then after thorough consideration of your proposal of 9 February for a draft declaration, and the text and model put forward by the Group of 21 the same afternoon, my delegation finds the latter the more reasonable. Consequently, the delegation of China supports the text and wording proposed on the afternoon of 9 February by the Group of 21. I would like to emphasize that this does not mean that the Chinese delegation has changed its basic position on item 1.

Thirdly, I would like to clarify an issue to avoid any misunderstanding. The Chinese delegation considers that within the CD a variety of parties regard PAROS, nuclear disarmament and FMCT as priority issues on the programme of work. The only way of dealing with the three issues is to treat them, thoroughly and comprehensively. Even if we accept the designation of two special coordinators to work on the organizational and jurisdictional aspects of PAROS and nuclear disarmament, our delegation still feels that FMCT must be a component of a complete solution to the matter. On the basis of this principle, my delegation will continue its cooperation with you, Sir, and with your successor and with the two special coordinators, in search of a comprehensive, balanced, and therefore fair and reasonable solution to the questions of PAROS, nuclear disarmament and FMCT. I thank you, Sir.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement. Maybe it opens up perspectives to my successor, if I listened carefully.

I now have on my list the representative of the Russian Federation. Ambassador Sidorov, you have the floor.

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Since we are in the final days of your tenure as President, Sir, I would to express our delegation's gratitude to you for your recent attempts to find a way out of the deadlock in which the Conference on Disarmament has regrettably found itself for so long.

At this meeting I would like to indicate Russia's priorities in the work of the Conference on Disarmament to ensure that the participants in the Conference have a better understanding. I wish to say that our main priority in the work of the Conference has recently been and still remains work to prevent an arms race in outer space. We have always considered that life itself, the very circumstances, the very events of recent times should bring home to the Conference on Disarmament the urgent need to tackle this problem. We have frequently had an opportunity, in this room, in the General Assembly and elsewhere, to set out our concerns on the state of affairs in this area. I wish to remind you that on the initiative of Russia and a number of other delegations, a resolution was adopted at the last session of the General Assembly on the situation with regard to the ABM Treaty. Events in the last few months have not only not diminished the urgency of this topic, but have made it even more topical. For that reason the Russian delegation has called and continues to call for the setting up of an ad hoc committee on the PAROS issue in the Conference on Disarmament, and we consider that it is such an important topic that it needs to be resolved without delay. In one of the forthcoming formal meetings of the Conference on Disarmament, the Russian Federation intends to make a special statement of that issue.

Another of our priorities will certainly remain the re-establishment of the committee on the prohibition of the production of fissile material, which, as we know, was created in 1998. We regret that to date, despite fairly intensive consultations, negotiations, the CD has not yet managed to get down to work, substantive work, on these two issues. We understand the difficulties experienced by individual delegations on particular issues. The Russian delegation has been trying to ease the task of the President, in seeking consensus. That is why, in showing flexibility in our approach and at the same time maintaining our positions of principle, naturally, we were ready to support your option 1, Sir, which you distributed a few days ago. In the same spirit, pursuing the aim of seeking and finding a way out of the deadlock, we are ready to support your proposal to designate two special coordinators in accordance with decision 1036 of the Conference on Disarmament. We would like to express the hope, Sir, that the future Presidents of the Conference will continue those consultations, and we wish you in the days remaining and the Ambassador of Bangladesh in the days to come success in those efforts.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Sidorov for his statement, for the kind words addressed to me and for the flexibility and constructive cooperation of his delegation during my tenure.

I think the list of speakers is exhausted. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case. I would therefore, with your permission, come to a few concluding remarks.

(The President)

We are now in the fourth year of blockade, yet the situation this year is not identical with previous years. I will refrain from trying to evaluate whether it is more difficult than before or not. Once again, the Conference has been the seismograph of events in the global context. Nobody could have expected anything else. We are not operating in an ivory tower; we reflect in this setting here the wider issues and stakes, and we should not complain about it because it is our raison d'être.

I was under no illusion when I assumed the presidency that we would overcome the existing obstacles. My expectations were quite modest and muted. Nevertheless, I interpreted my mandate in a sense that everything had to be tried in order to exploit any room for manoeuvre or, if it turned out that there was none, to demonstrate this as clearly as possible to all participants.

Well, now we know where we stand. I believe this is a prerequisite for further work. What could that further work consist of? This is a more difficult question to answer. The Conference, for its own good reasons, has disdained second-best solutions which would indeed have been available in the form of a reduced programme of work. In deciding against the adoption of such a reduced or lean programme of work which would not have contained any of the three items each of which is essential to a number of delegations, we would not have achieved much, but at least we would have been able to take up work in some areas. We would not have negotiated an arms control treaty, that is true, but I still believe that we would have been able to do some useful work. The Conference preferred to bide its time until the current situation changes, waiting for a breakthrough at a later date. It is a perfectly respectable decision, but, of course, one could not have expected the President himself to adopt such a position of wait-and-see at the very outset. For the President, the task consists in pointing out avenues of compromise, both substantive and procedural ones.

I take it with equanimity that not everybody agreed with the way in which I proceeded. It is the inevitable risk you run in this position. Yet I have not represented the interests of any particular group. The overriding motive of my efforts was to get the Conference out of the impasse in which it has found itself for some time already, for too much time indeed. The end of the road which we have now reached is heavily barricaded. To break through this barricade is not within the power of the presidency. It is only possible by the concerted effort of all of us.

At this point I should like to thank all of you, those who accepted my proposals but also those who rejected them, those who supported me in my efforts and those who could find little merit in them, because they all spent much time in meetings and consultations on the initiatives of the presidency. I should like to thank the secretariat, first and foremost Director-General Vladimir Petrovsky, for his unfailing encouragement and shared concern for the future of this

(The President)

organization; Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, for his discreet advice; and to all other members of the secretariat, including the interpreters, for their patience and dedication. As I hand over this presidency to my successor, Ambassador Iftekhar Chowdhury of Bangladesh, I can only wish him well. Knowing his irrespressibly good spirits and his personal style of charm diplomacy, he might be luckier than I have been in arriving at a result. This, at least, is what I wish him.

The next plenary meeting therefore will take place, as usual, on Thursday, 17 February, at 10 a.m. in this room.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.842
17 February 2000

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 17 February 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Ismat Jahan

(Bangladesh)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 842nd plenary meeting of the Conference.

As the delegation of Bangladesh assumes the presidency of the Conference, it is a distinct honour and privilege for me to represent Ambassador Iftekhar Chowdhury here today. Ambassador Chowdhury, who is currently in Bangkok in connection with the UNCTAD conference, regrets very much not being able to be present here today. Nonetheless, he has asked me to convey his warm greetings to you all. I would have rather liked to pause here and wait for Ambassador Chowdhury to return and make the opening remarks of the presidency as he joins us in the plenary next week. But I would be remiss if I did not express our deep gratitude to Ambassador Harald Kreid of Austria for his untiring efforts and the valuable contribution that he and his delegation have made during his presidency. My delegation is also grateful to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference, and Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, the Deputy Secretary-General, and all other members of the secretariat for their valuable support and indispensable counsel.

It is no secret that we continue to find ourselves in a situation of delicate deadlock. While we were successful in adopting the agenda of the Conference right at the beginning, we are yet to reach a consensus on the programme of work. In resolving the ongoing impasse, there is a need for renewed commitment and, more importantly, political will on the part of all CD members, especially those with notably strong national positions. We earnestly hope that the desired commitment and political will will be forthcoming, and that a spirit of cooperation and accommodation will soon come to prevail in this Conference. The Bangladesh delegation, during its presidency, will spare no effort to move the process forward. To this end, we would count on the cooperation, support and above all, the understanding of all members.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representative of the United States of America. I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Robert T. Grey.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): Madam President, as your country begins its service in the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), let me assure you of my delegation's full support in the difficult job you have undertaken. As your predecessor just over a year ago, I faced many of the same challenges that still confront you. It is undoubtedly a great frustration for both of us that the CD remains deadlocked in its efforts to agree on any elements to include in our work programme.

Some of the previous speakers during this session have claimed that the state of multilateral disarmament in the world at large does not give cause for optimism. In our view, this is too negative an appraisal. Even if one were to accept that the international community is not making as much progress as we would like, we in the CD need to remember that the picture outside our halls is not entirely bleak. The full record includes many practical achievements, and the international community continues to consolidate them today.

(Mr. Grey, United States)

The United States and Russia, for example, are ahead of schedule in making START I reductions, and our two countries have agreed to seek even lower levels of deployed warheads in START III. The United States continues to dismantle nuclear warheads; we have dismantled 7,000 since 1993 and 13,000 over the last decade. The United States has unilaterally removed hundreds of tons of fissile material from military stockpiles and has voluntarily pledged to make this material available for IAEA safeguards as soon as practical. We continue to work with Russia and others to ensure that nuclear materials are safe and secure, to enhance transparency, and to transform excess weapons plutonium irreversibly into forms that cannot be used in nuclear weapons.

In the non-nuclear field, the global regime established by the Chemical Weapons Convention continues to be strengthened. A wide range of countries have intensified their cooperation aimed at discouraging missile tests and the export of destabilizing missiles and related technologies. The United Nations is negotiating a global proposal to combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in small arms, which often pose a danger to regional stability. On the Korean peninsula, efforts to reduce tensions continue under a broad initiative developed by former Secretary of Defence William Perry. The United States and other countries are actively seeking to promote strategic restraint in South Asia, and there have been hopeful developments in negotiations to secure a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Undoubtedly, the United States Senate's failure last October to agree to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was a setback. However, President Clinton made it abundantly clear that the fight is not over. He is convinced that, in the end, the United States will ratify the CTBT, and the Administration has already taken steps to secure this outcome. A CTBT task force has been established, and the President has appointed General John M. Shalikashvili as a special adviser to reach out to members of the Senate, seek to bridge differences, and encourage the Senate ultimately to give its advice and consent to ratification.

Here in the CD, my country's first priority remains the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). This goal was identified in the "Principles and objectives" document of the 1995 NPT Review Conference as the next practical step in multilateral efforts leading toward nuclear disarmament. One speaker, however, whose country subscribed to the NPT "Principles and objectives" document, has now stated that his country will not permit the CD to negotiate on FMCT unless there are parallel negotiations on nuclear arms reductions and outer space.

But there is a broad understanding in this body that these two topics are not ripe for treaty negotiations in the CD at this time. The United States for its part is prepared to discuss, in a suitable context, outer space issues and questions related to the long-term goal of nuclear disarmament; but proposals for CD negotiations now in these fields are clearly not a basis for consensus.

It would be even more problematical to go in the other direction and downgrade CD work on FMCT from negotiation to discussion. A negotiation on FMCT is not new to the Conference on Disarmament. In 1995 and 1998 the Conference established ad hoc committees with just that

(Mr. Grey, United States)

task. To do anything less now would be a step backward. If we cannot move forward on the basis of a solid international consensus formally endorsed by the member States of the CD, all the parties to the NPT, and at the United Nations General Assembly, then no agreement is safe. Succumbing to the temptation to reopen previously agreed issues will only slow the disarmament process even further and increase the obstacles to the achievement of our shared goals.

My delegation is very concerned that we are headed in the wrong direction again this year. We began this session with an implicit understanding that two main issues remained to be resolved before we could agree on elements of a work programme and get down to business. Yet so far we seem to be increasing, rather than decreasing, our areas of disagreement.

What happens next is up to us. The CD will have no trouble maintaining its role as the world's single multilateral negotiating body if we do what is expected of us: negotiate multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements that contribute to the security and well-being of mankind. We need to focus on what is possible now, not seek perfect, all-encompassing solutions to disarmament. We also need to resist the urge to score political debating points or involve the CD in issues it cannot address effectively. If we can do this, members of the CD will have no trouble keeping it relevant and engaged. If not, those who seek progress on disarmament will look elsewhere.

In my remarks today, I have focused primarily on FMCT negotiations as a first priority for the CD. The United States continues to seek a CD role in negotiating a comprehensive ban on transfers of anti-personnel mines. We realize that the CD has never taken a formal decision to negotiate on APLs but it has on FMCT. We are deeply concerned that one or two countries are now calling this consensus on FMCT into question.

On another issue, I am obliged to comment on the remarks made recently in this hall by the distinguished representative of China. Aside from the erroneous impressions they created, these remarks involved the kind of name-calling on issues extraneous to the CD that complicates our mutual efforts to get practical work done.

It was implied that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was little more than a tool of the United States, available on demand for enforcing hegemonism, intervening in countries' internal affairs, and practising the unauthorized use of force.

As for seeking hegemony, the record speaks for itself. Americans are not interested in that sort of thing. One of our founding fathers and early Presidents, John Quincy Adams, got it right when he wrote this about the United States of America and her policy:

"Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions, and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own."

(Mr. Grey, United States)

That having been said, vindicating our national freedom and independence in today's world means accepting responsibilities far different from those we were willing to accept in Adams' time. The United States is now a main actor on the world stage - not the main actor, but a main actor.

This is an important and crucial distinction, for, as a distinguished historian, Eugene Rostow, who was my old boss at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, pointed out:

"[Though] American pride resists it, the United States is not strong enough, and cannot make itself strong enough, to protect its security interests in world politics with its own efforts alone. Our dependence on alliances and coalitions will necessarily continue in the years ahead..."

The point is clear: America looks for peace and security in partnership with like-minded nations. We do not seek domination, we seek balance. Just as we govern ourselves with a series of checks and balances, we embrace the same idea in international affairs. In short, we do not seek hegemony. We do not have the temperament or the inclination for it, nor do we have the means.

In addition, the assertion that our NATO allies are manipulated with impunity by the United States simply is not true. Defensive, democratic alliances do not work that way, either in Europe or elsewhere. Democratic alliances reach agreement collectively after much give and take. Massachusetts people like me learn very early in life that people who live north of us in Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, and our Canadian cousins as well, are just like us. They do not take orders from anyone. Neither do democratic allies like the Norwegians, the Dutch or the Australians, to name but a few. If there are any doubts on that score, just check with any NATO member who ever negotiated a NATO communiqué together with our French allies.

Far from exacerbating international tensions, the United States and its alliance partners in Europe and elsewhere have worked very hard to reduce them. In addition, since the end of the cold war, NATO has radically reduced its reliance on nuclear forces. The number of nuclear weapons for sub-strategic forces in Europe has gone down by over 85 per cent. The readiness posture of alert forces is now measured in weeks rather than minutes, and in 1996 NATO ministers announced that NATO has "no intention, no plan, and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new member countries". All the allies are parties to the NPT, and all NATO members are committed to early entry into force of the CTBT.

The distinguished representative of China also implied that the United States practised a double standard toward arms control agreements and was attempting to weaken or abolish the ABM Treaty. I reject this assertion. There has already been substantial public discussion of this issue, so the facts should be clear by now. The international environment has changed

**FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY-THIRD
PLENARY MEETING**

**Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 24 February 2000, at 10.10 a.m.**

President: Mr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury (Bangladesh)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 843rd plenary meeting of the Conference. Before I go into the substantive programme of the day could I, with your approval, make some initial remarks.

Distinguished delegates, the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament can be likened to the travels of Sisyphus. Condemned forever to push a stone up a hill only to see it roll back down just before he reached the top and then to have to start all over again. Some have simply been crushed beneath its weight, others have barely survived. Under the present circumstances to aspire to be one of the latter kind is to be ambitious. In this forum modesty is becoming of a wise Chair.

With such an end in view I shall seek your cooperation. I regret very much other compelling duties kept me from being in Geneva last week and from my present onerous responsibilities. Granted that dabbling in trade is not as grand as debating on disarmament, but the head of a small mission sometimes needs to do both. Given that the duty of the CD presidency is not one towards which my peers would direct curvaceous glances, I hardly ran the risk of loss of office. I am in debt to my colleague, Ms. Ismat Jahan, who held the fort in my absence. In the discharge of my onerous responsibilities I will look to all of you for support. It gives me a sense of satisfaction to know that I can count on the cooperation of our distinguished Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and our very able Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and their colleagues.

To fill Ambassador Kreid's shoes, or his chair, is not easy. I should be deeply remiss were I not to begin by paying my predecessor a well-deserved tribute. He has worked tirelessly, diligently, patiently and passionately, and through his dexterous stewardship and wise guidance he has sought to bring us closer to our goal. I was touched by the warm sentiments he expressed towards me in his concluding presidential remarks, particularly the reference to my personal charm albeit in an exaggerated fashion.

The Conference on Disarmament is, as has often been said, the sole multilateral forum devoted to that purpose. True, progress in our work, at least for now, appears stalled. Yet in the recent past the CD has notched up some no mean creditable achievements: the Chemical Weapons Convention and the CTBT, to name but two. I, for one, do not believe that it needs to produce a treaty annually in order to be judged successful. I believe its success lies in its ability to exchange views, to provide a forum to hear and to be heard, to reflect and to reason and then, when it is able, to reach and to frame agreements. This is not a forum to do business in haste, for it deals with the most primordial instincts of humankind, safety and security, towards which civilizations have devoted preponderant portions of their energies. I shall, therefore, not be a President in a hurry.

This is not to say I shall not be striving towards progress, be it in nuclear disarmament or in the prevention of an arms race in outer space or in fissile material or in negative security assurances. Each of these areas deserves our attention. On some there has been welcome groundwork laid. I intend to build on it brick by brick, trying to ensure that with each the edifice becomes firmer.

(The President)

Time was when we looked to this forum to attain the objectives of United Nations General Assembly resolution 1378 (XIV) of 20 November 1959, which called for general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Our inability to make headway towards that noble aim, or even, as has been the case over the last three years, to agree on a programme of work has led many of us to see the glass as half empty. Let us see it the other way, as half full, and let us see how we can increase its content drop by drop. But whatever steps we take, whatever advance we make, whatever forward movement we achieve will need to be done in agreement, in consensus and in harmony. Balance and symmetry will be critical in making such progress sustainable.

I am pleased to be able to say that in my own country, Bangladesh, the goal of general and complete disarmament has been incorporated into our Constitution. Our main purpose in joining the CD was to contribute towards the building of a peaceful and stable world so that our finite resources could be devoted to improving our quality of life. I am glad this presidency affords my country an opportunity to make a modest contribution to this end. I know that many members in comparable milieux with comparable policies and similar visions.

Those who are militarily more powerful, particularly the nuclear Powers, undeniably have a greater responsibility. I am not urging them to make undue sacrifices. I am simply inviting them to engage themselves with all others in a serious dialogue, in a spirit of understanding and flexibility, for a common cause. The group system was designed to advance, not to restrict, the search for common ground. Let us seek and find it.

I have consulted with some, I shall with more. I intend to make this presidency a collective endeavour, if there is a mechanism to try, I shall try it. If there is an effort to make, I shall make it. If there is a discussion to hold, I shall hold it. If there is an initiative to take, I shall take it. I shall relent. Enoch Powell, a controversial yet brilliant scholar and politician, once said "All political careers end in failures". This might also be true of most CD presidencies, but this I assure you: it shall not be this time round for want of trying.

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, first of all let me thank you for giving me the floor and congratulate you on your assumption of the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament at this important stage of its activity. I would like to wish you success and assure you of my delegation's readiness for constructive cooperation. Given that this is my first statement during the Conference session of this year, I would also like to welcome our new colleagues who have joined us in our work.

At the threshold of the twenty-first century international relations are undergoing a deep transformation. On the one hand, a qualitative positive shift in global affairs is obvious. The threat of a large-scale nuclear conflict has been removed. The cold war is over. Globalization, which opens the broadest opportunities for multifaceted interaction, is gaining momentum. On the other hand, the burden of the whole range of unresolved problems remains and is even growing heavier. Some of these problems are a legacy of the past, the epoch of confrontation. But the risks and challenges of a new generation that have recently come to light are growing steadily more acute. All this also applies to the sphere of disarmament, one that affects the

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

interests of the entire world community. Unfortunately the positive trends in disarmament which have been gaining strength for decades have started noticeably to mark time. Today a real threat is emerging to the existence of the system of arrangements and agreements constituting the basis for limitation and reduction of nuclear arms.

The Conference on Disarmament is a kind of barometer in the field of international security. As practice shows, all discussions about priorities in the work of this unique multilateral negotiating forum are closely bound up with a concrete political situation in the world. It is not surprising therefore that the topic of the prevention of an arms race in outer space has been so often and so persistently referred to during our plenary sessions. The growing attention to the problem is explained by a whole number of factors.

More than 30 States are already involved in outer space activities and many other countries are seeking to join this "club". The prospects for using near-Earth space for resolving humanity's economic and social problems are continually expanding. But it has to be admitted that outer space is increasingly being drawn into the sphere of military activity.

The problems of preventing an arms race in outer space have been for many years, and remain, among the priorities of Russian diplomacy. You will recall that our country has repeatedly initiated proposals in this field. The best known of them are the proposals from the early 1980s for the conclusion of treaties prohibiting the deployment in outer space of weapons of any kind and banning the use of force in outer space and from outer space against the Earth. Despite quite wide support those initiatives have, for a whole series of reasons, never been implemented in practice.

The Russian side has recently put forward new ideas that are directly linked to the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In this connection, we would like to draw your attention to the proposal made by the Russian President during the G8 meeting in Cologne in June 1999 to create a global missile and missile technology non-proliferation control system. Its implementation could, in our view, be an important step conducive to enhancing the predictability of the international environment, strengthening stability and attaining the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space.

That proposal is based on ideas expressed earlier, at various times and in various forums, by other countries such as France, Great Britain and Australia, for instance. We believe that resolving an issue of such magnitude requires achieving the broadest possible international interaction. The important thing at this stage is to determine the possible points of convergence that would allow all interested parties to engage in future in a more specific discussion in a context of opposition to missile proliferation.

The topicality of the outer-space issue today derives from the fact that no legal rules have yet been elaborated prohibiting the deployment, use or testing in space of types of weapons other than weapons of mass destruction. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty does not establish a general prohibition of the use of outer space for military purposes. The gradual development of space

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

technology and the latest high-technology weapons systems could serve as an incentive to some States to use this legal loophole for purposes inconsistent with peaceful activity in near-Earth space. It is not by chance that the final document of the third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE-III), the Vienna Declaration, contains a provision on the necessity of preventing an arms race in outer space and on the conduct there of peaceful activities in order to maintain international peace and security.

Advances in space technology are being actively employed for such "ancillary" military purposes as telecommunications, navigation, global positioning systems, etc. They are also being employed to maintain strategic stability in the world, namely to sound the Earth in order to ensure compliance with disarmament agreements. Similar rules have been embodied in some bilateral Russian-United States agreements and have received support from the world community. By using space-based systems it will obviously be possible in the future to resolve a more complex range of issues connected with ensuring international security such as, for instance, monitoring proliferation of nuclear and missile technologies or the build-up of conventional and strategic armaments in potential conflict zones.

It is well known that the world public is especially worried about the danger of turning near-Earth space into a new arena of power confrontation. The real risk of a new spiral in the arms race in outer space is connected above all with ideas of deploying their weapon systems directly intended for destruction of space, aerial and ground targets. The prevention of an arms race both in outer space and on Earth fully and completely depends on the viability of the 1972 ABM Treaty. It is well known that this document prohibits the development, testing and deployment in outer space of anti-ballistic missile components. Thus, its regime permits the prevention of the emergence of a whole class of space weapons, namely anti-ballistic missile weapons.

We want unambiguously to state that the Russian side is not conducting negotiations with the United States on the adaptation of the ABM Treaty. Our position, based on the supreme interests of strengthening peace and international stability, will not change. We openly and frankly state that we will not take part in the destruction of this fundamental document - which is, in practice, what is at issue.

The 1972 ABM Treaty indeed provides for the possibility of making changes to its provisions and the parties to the Treaty have made use of that in the past. However, the essence of those changes lay in reinforcing the Treaty regime, strengthening its "deterrent" fundamentals. Today our American partners are proposing that this document be adapted in such a way as to permit deployment of a "limited" national missile defence (NMD). That is contrary to the key provision of article 1 of the Treaty, which constitutes its substance. In other words, it is proposed to transform the ABM Treaty from an instrument prohibiting the creation of NMDs into a treaty concerning the creation of such systems, i.e. into its opposite. The result of such a transformation of the Treaty might be the setting in disarmament practice of a precedent whereby

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

an addition or amendment to an agreement that limits and curbs the development of the most advanced type of armaments would convert it into an agreement permitting the building-up of military potential. We do not agree with such logic. This approach of ours was confirmed once again during the recent visit to Moscow of the United States Secretary of State, Ms. Madeleine Albright.

If the United States implemented its unilateral plans on NMD, the ABM Treaty would be destroyed. The structure of treaties and agreements in the field of nuclear disarmament would crumble along with it. Serious damage would be done to the entire disarmament process, as well as to the regimes for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, missiles and missile technology. Extremely dangerous incentives to unleash an arms race in outer space would be created.

We consider the ABM Treaty to be a factor of global significance, the basis for strategic stability. In this sense its role goes far beyond the bounds of the arrangement between the small group of States to which it is formally limited. The results of the voting during the fifty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly on the "Preservation of and compliance with the ABM Treaty" resolution proposed by Russia jointly with Belarus and China were convincing proof of that and we see them as support for the efforts to enhance the Treaty's effectiveness and prestige.

We, like the majority of the world's other States, are increasingly concerned by the ongoing testing in the United States within the framework of the programme to create a national missile defence system. We constantly make our concerns known to our US partners during bilateral consultations, including the ones here in Geneva pursuant to the June 1999 Cologne agreement between the Presidents of Russia and the United States.

We are sure that the preservation of the Treaty corresponds to United States interests as well, especially in the context of the recent non-ratification by the United States Senate of the CTBT. The scrapping of the ABM Treaty would call into question everything that we have managed to achieve over the space of nearly 30 years in the sphere of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and disarmament control. It would inevitably deal a blow to the security interests not only of other countries, but of the United States itself.

We are convinced the Conference on Disarmament has, as stated in General Assembly resolution 54/53, the primary role in the further work on military space matters. For a number of years, serious and systematic work was done on this item in the Conference's relevant ad hoc committee: a whole series of constructive initiatives were put forward and interesting proposals were made that in our view need to be taken into account in the future work. Though this ad hoc committee had only a research mandate, the exchange of opinions that took place in it contributed towards better understanding by the countries participating in the work of the CD of the essence of this problem, as well as of the ways and means of preventing deployment of weapons in outer space.

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

We share the view that the elaboration right now of specific measures to prevent an arms race in outer space would help to avoid enormous expenditure on disarming space in the future. We believe that the speedy development of an international legal regime prohibiting the deployment in outer space of weapons other than weapons of mass destruction, and first and foremost strike weapons, should be one of the international community's principal tasks. We are convinced, however, that the work of the CD on outer-space matters should not result in the creation of obstacles to peaceful exploration of outer space.

The Russian side supports the re-establishment at the CD of the ad hoc committee on the subject in order to draw up specific, practical arrangements that would block the path to the transformation of near-Earth space into a new arena for power confrontation. In this respect we express solidarity with our Chinese colleagues, who also advocate the immediate re-establishment in the CD of an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space with a mandate to elaborate and conclude arrangements for "banning, testing, deployment and use of weapons, weapon systems or components thereof in outer space, with a view to preventing the weaponization of outer space".

The Russian delegation favours constructive cooperation and a search for mutually acceptable solutions on the subject of outer space. We hope that other delegations will also show political flexibility and that the sentiment that prevails will be one of support for an immediate start to work on this matter.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Sidorov for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation wishes to extend to you its sincere congratulations on your assumption of the important post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. It is my firm belief that your rich experience and outstanding capabilities will be conducive to facilitating positive results in the work of the Conference. The Chinese delegation assures you of its fullest cooperation.

At the last plenary session, the distinguished representative of the United States made some remarks in a polemic tone of cold war nature which are detrimental to the atmosphere of the Conference on Disarmament. This is most regrettable. He made some groundless allegations and accusations against China, which I totally reject. Having no intention to engage in a prolonged argument with the distinguished United States representative, I would confine myself to a few brief comments for the record with a view to rectifying the matter.

The distinguished United States representative said: "It was implied that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was little more than a tool of the United States", "... the assertion that our NATO Allies are manipulated with impunity by the United States simply isn't true", and he talked a lot on this point. But, as evidenced by the verbatim records of the Conference, I have neither implied this nor used words to that effect in my statements here at the Conference on Disarmament. If I understand correctly, the distinguished United States representative was just

(Mr. Hu, China)

trying to seek the opportunity to explain himself, so as to console the NATO allies. However, what the United States Ambassador said indeed presents a widespread opinion in international forums. Undoubtedly, certain countries feel ill at ease about these kinds of remarks. Be that as it may, it has never been my intention to make comments on the internal relations among members of a group of countries. At the same time, I will certainly reject such groundless accusations as were made by the distinguished United States representative, which may affect the relations between the Chinese delegation and other delegations.

I am very glad to hear the distinguished United States representative say: "We do not seek domination, we seek balance." I hope that the United States can prove these words by allowing the Conference on Disarmament to produce a balanced programme of work, rather than negotiating only the top-priority item of the United States while refusing negotiations on the other top-priority items of other countries.

The distinguished United States representative also mentioned that "there is a broad understanding" in the Conference that the two topics of nuclear disarmament and PAROS "are not ripe for treaty negotiations in the CD". I am afraid the majority of the member States of the Conference, including China, will not agree to this assertion. People cannot but ask why negotiations on nuclear disarmament and prevention of an arms race in outer space in the Conference "are not ripe"? What are the root causes for that? As we all recall, the resolution on prevention of an arms race in outer space adopted again by the United Nations General Assembly last year reiterates explicitly that the Conference has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects and invites the Conference to re-establish an ad hoc committee as early as possible during the 2000 session of the Conference. Eighty-seven per cent of the United Nations Member States (162 States) voted for this resolution, only 2 States abstained, and no State voted against it. The current reality in this Conference is that only a few countries, even only one country, due to its own outer-space weapon development programmes, insists that it is "not ripe" to negotiate on prevention of an arms race in outer space in the Conference on Disarmament. It is the delegation of this one country that vetoes, year after year and one after another, all the reasonable proposals concerning carrying out substantive work with regard to the outer space issue. In this connection, most countries have their own impartial opinions, and this should be viewed as a "broad understanding".

Moreover, some United Nations resolutions call upon the Conference to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament early in 2000 to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. Certainly, other United Nations resolutions also request the Conference to start negotiations on FMCT, NSA and other issues. Is there any difference in terms of priority and importance as far as the political and legal status of the above-mentioned United Nations resolutions are concerned?

The distinguished United States representative also talked about the achievements made by the United States and the Russian Federation in the field of nuclear disarmament. Undoubtedly, these achievements are among the most welcome and most encouraging positive

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developments since the end of the cold war. However, the problem for now lies in the fact that a series of negative developments since last year have cast shadows over the United States-Russian bilateral nuclear disarmament process. What is more, the global strategic balance and stability that have been maintained for about 50 years since the end of World War II are undermined by a certain country's weapon programmes. Though the ABM Treaty could be said to be mainly a matter between two countries, based on the principle of democracy and common security, however, the global strategic balance and stability and international peace and security are matters of concern for all and for the whole international community at large. Other countries are fully entitled to have their say on matters of such a nature. Isn't the right of speech the most fundamental right of democracy?

The distinguished United States representative said that the United States neither practised a double standard on arms control agreements nor tried to weaken or abrogate the ABM Treaty. This is most welcome if the words are really honoured by deeds. I hope to see that the declarations on the civilian chemical industry are made in strict observance of the time-frame of the CWC, that the practice of setting conditions for the implementation of the CWC verification system through domestic law will be abolished and that the CTBT will be ratified at an early date. What is more important is to support the United Nations resolution on the preservation of and compliance with the ABM Treaty, stop seeking the amendment of that treaty, refrain from the testing and deployment of weapons inconsistent with that Treaty, and cease making the threat that the ABM Treaty must be amended otherwise a State party will withdraw from it.

The distinguished United States representative made an issue over the transparency in the nuclear field. For a country possessing the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals, being a member of the strongest military alliance and pursuing a nuclear doctrine marked by the first use of nuclear weapons, it is relatively easy to practise some transparency in the nuclear matters. The reason behind is self-evident. In this connection, I wish that the distinguished United States representative could make a positive response to the long-standing call by China for an agreement "never to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstance". If all the five nuclear-weapon States can commit themselves not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against each other, thus leading to the conclusion of a treaty banning forever the use of nuclear weapons, that would certainly be a major contribution to the forthcoming NPT review conference.

The distinguished United States representative mentioned "the nuclear force modernization". For a country always taking the lead in the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles, to take other people to task for "modernization" is hypocritical. Furthermore, I have to point out that through a series of missile defence tests, the latest one on 18 January, the United States is not only further modernizing but even "futzurizing" the configuration of its offensive and defensive nuclear forces. If the missile defence programme cannot be checked, reality will prove this.

The distinguished representative of the United States spoke of the missile test in 1996. By this he alluded to the issue of Taiwan. I must solemnly point out that the Taiwan issue is

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completely an internal affair of China. No powers in the world, including the United States, can stop the Chinese people from realizing the re-unification of their motherland. There has always been a force in the United States trying to encourage Taiwan towards separation, and the United States has for many years continuously supplied sophisticated weaponry to the Taiwan province of China, thus encroaching upon China's sovereignty, interfering in its internal affairs and threatening its security. What the United States should do is to stop all these wrongdoings immediately.

I wish to emphasize that the Chinese delegation has all along participated in the work of the Conference in a positive, serious and responsible manner. We are not here to quarrel. Only those who are unable to justify themselves would resort to hurling abuse instead of discussion. We are prepared to discuss matters with any delegation in a calm and frank manner. We have no intention to engage in polemics. It is the hope of the Chinese delegation that this Conference could reach agreement on a comprehensive, just and balanced programme of work on the basis of equal footing and mutual respect.

The second subject of my statement today is related to the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space. As pointed out in our working paper on this issue, the prevention of an arms race in outer space is one of the most pressing and most prominent issues in the field of arms control and disarmament. This is by no means exaggeration, but a sound judgement of the real situation in the use of outer space, especially the trends and prospects of the weaponization of outer space and an arms race in outer space.

Ever since the beginning of the use of outer space by mankind, the military use of outer space has been unceasing. The so-called "Star Wars" programme (SDI), which haunted mankind for almost 10 years during the cold war period, is still fresh in the memory of mankind. In April 1998, a certain country formulated a twenty-first-century-oriented long-term plan for space military strategies. According to this plan, military space capabilities will become a major fulcrum in implementing its national security and military strategies. Consequently, the plan identifies the seeking of space superiority as the primary task of the space force of the country in the twenty-first century. It has furthermore put forward four operational concepts to ensure its superiority in space, i.e. control of space, global engagement, full force integration and global partnership. Building up its space force, which will help maintain its space superiority in the twenty-first century, has become an important tool for it to achieve its strategic objectives.

"Control of space" is the ability to ensure uninterrupted access to space for the proponent country and its allies, freedom of operations within the space medium and the ability to deny others the use of outer space, if required. "Global engagement" is the combination of global surveillance of the Earth (ability to monitor any ground target any time) and the use of space capabilities in support of war fighting potentials on the Earth.

By 2020, the country in question will probably have deployed an NMD system with many space-based laser weapons and space-based sensors included in the system. Its surveillance and strike capabilities for land, sea and air targets will improve through the use of space systems. "Full force integration" means integrating space forces and space-derived

(Mr. Hu, China)

information with their counterparts on land, sea and air. "Global partnership" is meant for strengthening the country's military space capabilities through making use of civilian, commercial and national space systems. With allied countries sharing costs and risks, the country will increase opportunities for itself and the flexibility of its overall military capabilities at reduced cost.

According to this plan, 20 years from now weapons based on land, in the sea and the air and using outer space as a battlefield, as well as space operation vehicles, platforms and lasers directly deployed in outer space, will become the key strategic weapon systems of that country.

In recent years, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) has been quickly revived in a certain country. Not only is the Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system being developed, but the National Missile Defense (NMD) system is being vigorously pursued as well. Due to the implementation of these programmes, outer space is being transformed into a new weaponry testing ground and thus deprived of its tranquillity. In 1999 alone, the said country conducted several ballistic missile interception tests in outer space and it is planning to carry out dozens more of such tests in the coming years.

The National Missile Defense system pursued by that country is typical space weapon system. Its basic operation process is as follows: first detect the missile launch of an enemy State through early-warning satellites deployed in outer space; then detect and track targets through sensors, including those deployed in outer space; and finally intercept and destroy the target missiles in space with one or more interceptor missiles. The space system is an important, integral part of the NMD system and space will also become a battlefield for the system. The theater high-altitude missile defence systems that are currently under development, such as the Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system of its army and the Navy Theater Wide (NTW) system of its navy, rely on the integral space system and carry out interception missions in space.

In a word, both the TMD and NMD systems under development are dependent on space systems for support and on advanced space weapons for intercepting missiles in space. The space-based laser that is under vigorous development is, as indicated by its name, a weapon system directly deployed in outer space. According to the current plan, that country will deploy 14 to 24 space-based lasers at an altitude of 1,300 kilometers in outer space in the future.

"Control of space" is, in essence, an attempt to establish domination of outer space by means of advanced technology, so as to serve one's own strategic objectives. This will deprive other countries of their right to benefit from outer space through peaceful means as well as of their legitimate right of self-defence. It shows that the said country is seeking unilateral military and strategic superiority by any means available. This will definitely undermine global and regional peace, security and stability and disrupt strategic equilibrium.

There are two scenarios if the plan is materialized. First, other countries may have to reconcile themselves to the reality without challenging the attempt of a certain space Power to

(Mr. Hu, China)

seek absolute strategic superiority on the ground and in space, in addition to its currently largest and most advanced nuclear and conventional arsenals. Second, other countries may have to take responsive measures on the ground, in the air and in outer space, the result of which would be unpredictable. Whatever the outcome, the efforts in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will turn out to be futile.

Similarly, the missile defence programme itself is also likely to cause weaponization of outer space. The 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) prohibits its States parties from developing, testing and deploying ABM systems or components that are space-based. It also prohibits the development and deployment of national missile defence systems that are capable of covering the entire territory of a country. This Treaty has been playing an indispensable role in maintaining global strategic stability, preventing an arms race in outer space and ensuring gradual progress in nuclear disarmament. With the end of the cold war, the rivalry between the two super-Powers for hegemony has disappeared and peace and development have become the aspiration of the world's people and the main theme of the times. Against this background, arms control treaties like the ABM Treaty should have played an even more important role. If a State party attempts to evade its Treaty obligations or even tear up the Treaty, it will set a bad precedent in the field of multilateral arms control and disarmament. It will not only undermine global and regional strategic balance and stability and obstruct or even reverse the nuclear disarmament process, but will also open the door to the weaponization of outer space.

The mentioned facts show that the weaponization of outer space and an arms race in outer space are not sheer imagination. No country should cite any excuse to prevent the Conference on Disarmament from conducting substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and prohibition of the weaponization of outer space, including negotiations in this regard. The international community must act without any delay to keep the worst from happening. As the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference should, under its agenda item of PAROS, and taking into account the latest movements concerning the development of relevant weapons systems, including the missile defence systems, take concrete measures without any delay to prevent effectively the weaponization of outer space, prohibit the test, deployment and use of any weapon systems and their components in outer space, stop any country from using outer space as a battlefield and prohibit the use of outer space to strike ground targets and seek strategic superiority on the ground.

It should be emphasized that countries with the greatest space capabilities should assume special responsibilities in preventing the weaponization of outer space, preventing an arms race in outer space and ensuring the use of outer space for peaceful purposes. Pending the conclusion of new international legal instruments on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the countries concerned should undertake not to develop space weapons and anti-missile weapons and not to test, deploy or use any weapons, weapons systems or their components in outer space.

(Mr. Hu, China)

The Chinese delegation sincerely hopes that all sides in the Conference will, by seriously examining the current situation and responding to the universal request of the international community, actively promote the substantive work of the Conference in preventing an arms race in outer space and negotiating an international legal instrument banning the testing, deployment and use of weapons, weapon systems and their components in outer space.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Hu for his statement and for the kinds words addressed to the Chair.

That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor. That does not appear to be the case. So that also concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 2 March 2000, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

**FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOURTH
PLENARY MEETING**

**Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 2 March 2000, at 10.20 a.m.**

President: Mr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury (Bangladesh)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 844th plenary meeting of the Conference. I have on my list of speakers for today the representative of Japan.

As you are aware, our esteemed colleague and friend, Ambassador Akira Hayashi of Japan, will be leaving the Conference shortly, having been called to other important duties by his Government. During his time here, he has presented the position of his Government with prodigious skills and talent. His personal contribution to our collective efforts to bring about a consensus which would allow the start of substantive work of the Conference has been appreciated by all. I am personally beholden to him for the friendship he has always shown me. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all of us when I express to Ambassador Hayashi and his family our very best wishes for their continued success and personal happiness.

Mr. HAYASHI (Japan): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your kind words to me and best wishes to me and to my family.

Mr. President, at the outset, I should like to congratulate you most warmly on your assumption of the presidency and wish you every success in discharging your important duties. I am certain that your wisdom and diplomatic skills will help bring about in the CD the long-awaited positive agreement on our work. My delegation pledges its full cooperation in your endeavours. I should also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Harald Kreid of Austria, for his initiative and strenuous efforts to promote the start of substantive work in the CD.

It is unfortunate that my delegation has not yet been able to make a policy statement at this year's session. I had been waiting for an opportunity conducive to doing so, possibly after the successful adoption of the work programme. Much to my regret, I now have missed that opportunity for good, because today I am speaking for the last time at the CD, while a prospective work programme is still under consideration or possibly even in long hibernation.

After my two and a half years of tenure here, I should today like to state some of my personal observations on the CD. First of all, I would not be honest if I said, "I am satisfied with the work I have done here and I am leaving with a sense of achievement". It is regrettable that I have not been able to participate in any substantive negotiations in the CD.

Before I came to Geneva in 1997, I was told that the situation at the CD was not very propitious for the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT, despite the fact that it had long been agreed as its next item for negotiation. But, honestly, I did not anticipate that such a situation would continue during my entire tenure.

The report of the Tokyo Forum published last year stated as one of its recommendations: "The Tokyo Forum calls on the Conference on Disarmament to revise its procedures, update its work programme, and carry out purposeful work, or suspend its operations. The consensus rule is causing perpetual deadlock. Consensus among members of the Conference on Disarmament should not be necessary to begin or conclude negotiations on a multilateral convention". I understand that this is a kind of manifestation of the deep frustration felt by some experts

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

looking at the CD from the outside. The frustration and the disappointment for those who are within the CD, including myself, are naturally much greater. But I personally do not agree with this recommendation, since the existence of the consensus rule itself is not the only cause of the sorry state of the CD, and suspension of the CD's operations would certainly not change the situation for the better.

My predecessor, Ambassador Kurokuchi, referred to the CD's consensus rule in her farewell speech. In it, while admitting that the consensus rule was indispensable to the CD, she stated: "When a point at issue is a procedural matter which does not prejudice the question of substance, every country should refrain as much as possible from exercising a veto". This assertion apparently did not obtain much support at the CD. Instead, I have frequently heard such words of caution as, "Procedure is substance" and "Devils are in detail". I have to confess that my own experience here during these two and a half years, has made me more sympathetic to the argument of my predecessor.

Different views have been expressed on this famous consensus rule of the CD. Some advocate adhering scrupulously to this rule in every nook and corner of the CD's operations. Some argue the necessity of a less rigorous application of the rule, especially to procedural matters. The recent case of this difference is the interpretation of paragraph 5 (d) of CD/1036.

Despite all these disputes on that consensus rule, one thing I should like to stress is that the consensus rule should be taken as distinctly different from granting the right of veto to each member. If this distinction is not properly made, the rule would inevitably turn out to be a recipe for indecision and no action. What is essential to the consensus rule, in my view, is the common recognition of the prerequisite for employing the rule. That prerequisite is the fundamental orientation towards achieving compromises for the sake of agreements rather than a pursuit of individual positions by ultimately resorting to the right of veto. This necessitates opportunities for thorough discussions through which differences among the participants are identified and efforts to narrow such differences are pursued based on self-restraint. I have the impression - though I hope I am wrong - that the members of the CD have collectively become insensitive to the prerequisite that makes the consensus rule workable. Such a sense of resignation as, "nothing to do because there is no consensus", is prevailing at the CD. What seems to be lacking actually at the CD is the conscious effort to make consensus rather than consensus itself. Clearly something must be done to redress the situation for the purpose of restoring normalcy to the Conference.

I have no magic formula, but my humble suggestion is this: create more opportunities for discussions in informal settings across regional groups where we could conduct frank exchanges of views - the kind of exchanges that have so far often remained within each group and within bilateral contacts. This would enhance the transparency of the work of the CD and increase awareness for progress, and would consequently create more chances for consensus to emerge in the CD. It is my earnest hope that the CD will start its substantial work as soon as possible.

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

I was told when I arrived in Geneva that the CD was the best club in town. In fact, it is. I have enjoyed immensely the company of my colleagues and have been tremendously stimulated intellectually. But the CD should not be complacent with only good comradeship.

Lastly, I wish to take this opportunity to express my wholehearted gratitude to the Secretary-General of the CD, Mr. Vladimir Petrosvsky, and Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and all other members of the Secretariat, as well as the interpreters, for the cooperation and help they have extended to me and my deep appreciation to them for their dedication and efficiency.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Hayashi for his moving statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. Ambassador Hayashi, once again, our very best to you. I do share your hope that substantive negotiations may begin soon, and that normalcy, as you say, will soon be restored to the work of the Conference.

This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

I should now like to take up for a decision the request from Albania to participate as observer in the work of the Conference during this session without first considering it at an informal plenary meeting. This request is contained in document CD/WP.509, which is before you. May I take it that the Conference agrees to this request?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes our business for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I recognize the distinguished representative of the United States.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): Mr. President, through you, I would like to extend an invitation to all the members and non-member participants of the Conference on Disarmament to attend a presentation by the United States on nuclear disarmament issues. The presentation will take place here in the Council Chamber on Tuesday, 7 March, starting at 10 a.m. and will be given by Mr. Frank Miller, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Threat Reduction. Following Mr. Miller's presentation, there will be an opportunity for questions and answers on issues relating to nuclear disarmament.

This presentation will be closed to the public and media in order to encourage candour and vigorous give-and-take. I look forward to what I am sure will be an interesting and useful exchange of views.

The PRESIDENT: Distinguished colleagues, as you are aware, since I assumed the Presidency of the Conference, I have undertaken a round of intensive consultations with a number of delegations on the programme of work of the Conference. As a result of these efforts, I have circulated to all of you a non-paper containing possible steps towards a programme of work. The preliminary reactions to my proposals indicate that further consultations will be needed, and I pledge to you that I will use the remaining days of my presidency in an effort to bring about agreement on the early start of our substantive work.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 9 March 2000, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.845
9 March 2000

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 9 March 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury (Bangladesh)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 845th plenary meeting of the Conference.

Allow me at the outset to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Borys Tarasyuk, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr. Knut Vollebaek, who will be addressing the Conference today. Their presence among us testifies both to the abiding commitment of their Governments to our common endeavours and to the continued importance that they attach to our forum. I also have on my list of speakers for today the representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Hofer.

It gives me much pleasure to extend a cordial welcome to the representatives of non-governmental organizations who are with us today. As you are aware, International Women's Day was celebrated yesterday, 8 March, and, to mark this event, the participants in the annual International Women's Day seminar will, in accordance with established practice, address a message to the Conference. I am certain that the Conference joins me in conveying our best wishes to all women present here today, and our appreciation for their steadfast commitment to peace and disarmament, as well as for continuing interest in our work.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): It is a great pleasure for me to read the following statement to the Conference on Disarmament from the annual International Women's Day seminar, which took place in Geneva on 7 and 8 March. The statement reads as follows:

"The participants in the annual International Women's Day seminar appreciate this opportunity to address you. This year's seminar, on the theme: 'The reporting of war and disarmament: the role of the media in building a culture of peace', was a timely contribution to the International Year for the Culture of Peace. The seminar explored the part played by non-governmental actors in international relations, with a special focus on the role of the media in building cultures of peace. Experience has shown that the media can play a role in fuelling conflict, through the misrepresentation of issues and history. In conflict situations, information becomes an even more valuable commodity; it can, however, also be utilized for transformative purposes and can contribute significantly towards peace-building.

"The participants consistently affirmed the need to promote reconciliation at the local level, in order to build communities living in peace. In this regard, women have demonstrated considerable leadership skills all over the world with their commitment to and capacity for the making and building of peace through regional disarmament programmes and participation in peace negotiation and reconciliation at community and national levels.

"The state of global insecurity demands a greater effort on the part of Governments to make 2000 a year in which significant impediments in disarmament are overcome. The increased use of such preventive diplomacy strategies as mediation, the

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference
on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the
Secretary-General of the United Nations)

strengthening of democratic institutions and promotion of local and international reconciliation can only make a positive contribution towards transcending conflict and injustice. Greater efforts towards transparency will also contribute to the creation of a climate of confidence in which the crucial issue of comprehensive and general disarmament with nuclear disarmament as the key goal can be achieved. The Conference on Disarmament is the world's only forum in which such a programme of disarmament can and must be achieved.

"The seminar examined why disarmament issues and initiatives are generally under-reported in the media. In this context, the work of non-governmental organizations in educating the general public that over 30,000 nuclear weapons still exist on the planet today and continue to be invested with political legitimacy and enormous financial resources is particularly valuable. The creative use of media as an awareness-raising and educational tool will be witnessed throughout the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Women's organizations are leading that effort through inviting prominent personalities to the event, and through using technology to provide instant on-line information, as well as digital sound-bites, images and video materials for journalists.

"The participants in the seminar urge all those gathered here today to enter into the NPT Review with a new spirit of cooperation and determination to rid the world of the continuing threat - accidental or otherwise - of nuclear weapons. 'It is going to be a difficult conference', Secretary-General Kofi Annan said recently. 'We have only one Earth and we all have a responsibility for it. Usually when we talk about nuclear weapons I am reminded of an African proverb which says that the air is not ours, it is a treasure we hold in trust for future generations. And I think we should be worthy of that trust.'

"The participants in the seminar call upon the Governments of all nations to reaffirm the solemn obligations contained in article VI of the NPT. This moral and legal obligation, as the International Court of Justice concluded in 1996, is a compelling motivation to end nuclear programmes of all kinds and dismantle weapon stockpiles. A key preliminary step in this direction that would serve both to reduce the danger of purely accidental war and improve the climate for advancement is taking warheads off alert status. Effectively we are all held hostage by a permanent bomb scare because of 5,000 nuclear weapons poised on hair-trigger alert. The 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference paved the path towards disarmament through the package of decisions which included the Principles and Objectives document. The task of the 2000 Review Conference is to reaffirm these principles, search for ways to break the current stalemate and identify benchmarks and objectives for a more substantive approach to disarmament during the next five-year period.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

"The NPT will be undermined if the five nuclear weapon States continue to expect 182 States to fulfil their legal obligations while not really fulfilling their own. While acknowledging the reduction in numbers of nuclear weapons held in some States, the world still waits for the necessary decision to disarm and eliminate. 'Eventually' is not soon enough for an increasingly impatient majority of the world's Governments and people. The development of nuclear weapons took place under conditions of absolute secrecy, but when the people are consulted, it is shown by numerous polls that they want their Governments to give what the NPT promised - nuclear disarmament.

"The failure of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to enter into force is indeed a disappointment. Non-governmental organizations will continue to play a vital role in conducting some of the necessary public education that facilitates shifts in the political will to reach ratification. Governments must, however, provide leadership and pursue the course to which they have declared their commitment despite all other pressures. All Governments are urged to sign and ratify this important treaty.

"At the start of the new century, contemplation of the deployment of ballistic missile defence systems is a serious source of concern. Pursuing such a hostile and flawed mode of security not only contributes erroneously to already faltering disarmament efforts but also potentially violates the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. As you will recall, the 1999 annual International Women's Day seminar was devoted to the topic of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We reaffirm the importance of exploration and use of outer space as only to be for peaceful intent and the advancement of all peoples.

"Armed conflict and the preparation for armed conflict exists in every region of the world. Inter-State and intra-State conflicts continue to generate all types of displacement of peoples, the majority of whom are women and their dependants. The Canadian Foreign Minister, Mr. Lloyd Axworthy, recently commented on the dangers faced by civilians in modern armed conflict, observing that the victimization of civilians is no longer a 'tragic by-product of war, but often the principal aim.' Small arms and light weapons are the main tools of this victimization. In 1997 the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms found that almost every part of the United Nations is dealing with the consequences of recent armed conflicts fought mostly with small arms and light weapons. Controlling the spread of small arms is a challenge that all Governments must embrace if cultures of violence are to be changed.

"The envisaged United Nations conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects will be a litmus test of Governments' commitment to addressing the illicit supply of and demand for these weapons. An estimated 5,000 illicit arms traffickers reap large profits, capitalizing on global conflict and instability. Stringent efforts also need to be directed towards the manufacture and supply of small

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arms. The countries that are the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council produce about 85 per cent of the world's small arms. The participants call upon all Governments to commit themselves to developing an international legal framework that acts to stem this deadly trade.

"Finally, we urge the Conference on Disarmament to work towards procedural change to provide for greater non-governmental organization participation. The Nobel Prize-winning International Campaign to Ban Landmines is a fine example of the capacity of non-governmental organizations to produce global results in the pursuit of disarmament. Momentum is growing on banning the use of child soldiers, curbing illicit small-arms proliferation and the establishment of an international criminal court. Creating groundswells of support is a key facet of the work of non-governmental organizations, and public support is crucial in the implementation of a complete disarmament agenda. Non-governmental organizations can contribute a diverse range of expertise and analysis to the Conference. The expansion of the Conference to include the voices of civil society represents an important next step in the evolution of this unique forum.

"In a world increasingly interconnected by the forces and impulses of globalization, comprehensive security derives its strength from our recognition of linkages with one another as people and nations. Our common security is contingent on our ability to work with one another for mutual aspirations. We urge the Conference on Disarmament to set a work programme for the year as well as to start work on already agreed objectives such as the long overdue negotiations on the prohibition and production of fissile materials for weapons purposes.

"The participants in the annual International Women's Day seminar wish you well in your work and assure you of their full support in the steps you take towards comprehensive disarmament."

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Petrovsky for reading out the message of the seminar. I now give the floor to the Coordinator of the Group of 21, Ambassador Antonio de Icaza of Mexico.

Mr. DE ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): On behalf of the delegations which are members of the Group of 21, I wish to express our appreciation for the message which we have just heard, sent on the occasion of International Women's Day to the Conference on Disarmament by the community of women's non-governmental organizations committed to peace and disarmament.

Our group also wishes to express its appreciation for the continued interest in and invaluable support for the work of the Conference on Disarmament on the part of women's

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

non-governmental organizations. Their fruitful contributions to the cause of general and complete disarmament and their committed action in support of peace and international security are a great source of encouragement to us in our continued efforts towards bringing about a weapons-free world.

The Group of 21 is convinced that the active participation of women in the international peace movement is a reflection of the genuine interest of more than half of the world's population in making the goal of general and complete disarmament a reality and in guaranteeing a peaceful future for mankind. We are honoured to congratulate all women worldwide who are committed to this goal.

We would also like to congratulate the distinguished women colleagues who are the heads or members of delegations participating in the Conference on Disarmament and those staff members in the secretariat and interpretation booths who are supporting our work and facilitating our communications.

Ms. HOUBEN-VAN NOTTEN (Netherlands): Mr. President, before turning to my statement with regard to Women's Day, let me first welcome here today, on behalf of the Western Group, Minister Vollebaek of Norway and Minister Tarasyuk of Ukraine. It is an honour to have them here and we look forward to their statements.

With regard to International Women's Day, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Western Group, to the representatives of the women's international organizations who have joined the Conference on Disarmament today and who come here every year to demonstrate their commitment to the Conference and the issues of disarmament. On behalf of the Western Group, I would also like to thank the Women for Peace Working Group for the message of encouragement contained in their address.

We listened with great interest. Once more it was brought to our attention that our Conference does not work in a vacuum - even though we like to keep our curtains closed here, we are not a world in itself: but we serve the world. We are aware of the expectations of the world community. The absence of an agreement on a work programme in the Conference on Disarmament should not be interpreted as lack of concern on the part of the Western Group and other delegations in this room about the issues that need to be addressed. The Western Group in fact believes that there are issues on the disarmament calendar, such as negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which need to be addressed with the highest priority.

I can assure our visitors today that we feel encouraged by their presence here. We would like to pay tribute to them for promoting the cause of disarmament and its importance for international peace and security.

I would also like to take the floor on behalf of another group, a cross-regional group in the Conference on Disarmament, which does not officially exist, but which is very present. It is

(Ms. Houben-van Notten, Netherlands)

the group of women in the Conference on Disarmament. Yesterday we came together to celebrate Women's Day, and more importantly, to discuss our work in the Conference. While I do not want to present you with the conclusions of our deliberations, I would like to put forward the idea, that next year the women of the Conference read out a statement of their own on the occasion of Women's Day.

I would like to end with a quotation from Joseph Conrad, which applies to women, especially to women in the Conference on Disarmament. "Being a woman is a terribly difficult task, particularly since it consists mainly of dealing with men."

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): On behalf of the Eastern European Group, allow me to convey heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to our women colleagues in the Conference on Disarmament, ambassadors and members of delegations, as well as to our women colleagues in the secretariat, on the occasion of International Women's Day. On behalf of the delegations which are members of the Eastern European Group, I wish to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, for reading out the message from the seminar of non-governmental organizations held on the occasion of International Women's Day. On behalf of the members of our Group, may I wish the representations of those women's non-governmental organizations which have shown unflagging interest in our work good health, happiness and prosperity

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): It gives me great pleasure to express, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, warm congratulations to all women on the occasion of International Women's Day. In particular, I would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations and sincere greetings to our women colleagues in all missions, to all the women sitting now in the gallery and all the very helpful women staff of the Conference Secretariat.

The wheels of history are pushed forward by the joint efforts of men and women. Yet women and children have always been the main victims of the countless wars over the course of history. Naturally, women all over the world desire peace and cherish security, stability and happiness in life. That is why they have been making unremitting efforts in many areas and many fields, including those of international arms control and disarmament.

The Chinese delegation highly respects and deeply appreciates the interest in and support for the work of the Conference on Disarmament on the part of women everywhere and of various international women's organizations. I have come to know some women activists, both government officials and members of non-governmental organizations, who have shown deep insight in the most important and pressing issues, such as nuclear disarmament and the prevention of arms race in outer space, and have played a positive role in pursuit of these goals. The statement which we have just heard from the annual International Women's Day seminar to the Conference on Disarmament has amply demonstrated that point.

It should also be noted that the women non-governmental organizations devoted to awareness-raising, educational and promotional work in the field of arms control and

(Mr. Hu, China)

disarmament are gathering strength and expanding their influence. These organizations have not only brought new vitality to the cause of international disarmament but have also made great contributions to safeguarding international peace and security. In conclusion, we would like to convey our best wishes to all women on International Women's Day and wish them good health and happiness.

Mr. TARASYUK (Ukraine): Let me first express my sincere appreciation for the skilful manner in which the President has steered the Conference on Disarmament over the last month. I take this opportunity also to convey my best wishes to the people of Bangladesh - a country that plays an important stabilizing role in the volatile region of South Asia, where nuclear risks have still to be reduced and eliminated. Bangladesh and Ukraine, from the beginning of this year and into the next millennium, are assuming responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security as non-permanent members of the Security Council.

I would like also to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, and the secretariat staff for their valuable contribution to the activities of the Conference.

The message we have just heard from the international women's community proves how sensitive women - the better part of the world's population - are to the current difficulties in the disarmament process and how disturbed they are about those difficulties. Please be assured that the Government of Ukraine shares many of your concerns and is your genuine ally in moving humankind to a more secure and stable world.

The present pattern of international security is directly linked to the progress or the lack thereof in disarmament and non-proliferation. The world has entered the twenty-first century with new challenges, while it has not got rid completely of the old ones.

Ten years ago, with the end of the cold war and bloc confrontation, many sincerely hoped that these new geopolitical realities would lead to a deep re-evaluation of the global security risks, to a phased reduction in armaments and eventually to a safer and more stable world with fewer armaments stockpiles.

The beginning was quite encouraging. Negotiations between the United States and the USSR, and later the Russian Federation, continued intensively. Among the achievements in the sphere of disarmament we should mention the implementation of START I, the indefinite extension of the NPT, the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its endorsement by the United Nations General Assembly and the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction.

Ukraine has also made a significant contribution to this process of disarmament. Accession to the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty in 1992, the 1992 Lisbon Protocol codifying our accession to START I, the Trilateral Statement by the Presidents of the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States of America of January 1994, accession to

(Mr. Tarasyuk, Ukraine)

the NPT in November 1994 and accession to the Open Skies Treaty just a week ago have considerably improved the global security environment. We fully realized that clinging to the nuclear legacy would seriously jeopardize our independence, destabilize the world order and lead to international isolation. Instead, voluntary renouncement of the world's third largest nuclear potential has brought its obvious dividends in the form of wide recognition and strengthened political and economic cooperation with the world. In doing so, we have demonstrated to the whole world community our responsibility for the maintenance of international security. This was and remains the largest investment in the process of nuclear disarmament. Presently, Ukraine is actively integrating into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, maintains good relations with its neighbours and is an acknowledged net contributor to European security - all this achieved without any need for nuclear weapons.

Regrettably, this good example has not been followed by some other nuclear and threshold States. Progress in disarmament has been and is often now held hostage to diverging national security considerations, foreign policy ambitions, internal political debates, or confrontation between neighbouring States.

The lack of political will on the part of the leading world powers, insufficient cooperative ties among them and, as a result, underdeveloped international instruments for enforcing disarmament have led to additional negative phenomena, though against their own will. All this leads to the following:

First, some States have learned to manipulate the differences among the acknowledged nuclear powers to proceed with their nuclear programmes.

Second, the non-accession to the NPT by key States plays into the hands of individual nuclear terrorists who see more opportunities to obtain necessary technologies.

Third, the slow pace of global disarmament has given some States reasons for argument about discriminatory approaches and has pushed them openly to declare their own nuclear programmes.

It is obvious that further reductions of nuclear weapons will be possible only with the marginalization of their role in the national security considerations of the nuclear-weapon States (NWS). To date, for some countries, nuclear threat remains the only means to assert themselves and to influence international politics, because of the degraded political and economic tools. This is evidence of weakness, rather than strength. On the other hand, some later developments in Europe affecting its security have given those States reasons to place an ever greater emphasis in their national doctrines on the importance of nuclear weapons. This vicious circle can be broken only through enhanced confidence-building measures, by swiftly repairing the emerging misunderstandings and vigorously proceeding with disarmament talks.

I would single out two dimensions in the disarmament process. The first implies continued activity on the enforcement and improvement of existing international instruments in this sphere. The second envisages universal approaches, of which I will speak later.

(Mr. Tarasyuk, Ukraine)

START I is one of the pillars of disarmament. Ukraine became one of the legal successors of the former Soviet Union to this Treaty. Now the parties have embarked upon the third and final phase of reducing their strategic offensive arms, which has to be completed for Ukraine by December 2001. It should be mentioned that, as of 1 March 2000, Ukraine had eliminated 77 per cent of the total number of strategic offensive arms located on its territory. The last strategic nuclear warhead, removed from Ukrainian territory in June 1996, was dismantled at the end of 1999 in the Russian Federation under the control of Ukrainian supervisors. Now it is imperative to achieve the entry into force of START II and to resume talks on START III.

We are approaching the Sixth Review Conference of the States parties to the NPT. In this context I wish to recall a decision adopted at the previous NPT Review Conference in 1995 which stipulates the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

The Ukrainian delegation to the Conference on Disarmament has spared no effort to promote the start of these negotiations, particularly during the first Ukrainian presidency in 1998, when our Conference established an Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. Since that time the Conference has been unable to resume these negotiations, and we expect that the Sixth NPT Review Conference will give its recommendations on this matter.

The lack of progress in the ratification process of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is one of the results of lack of confidence among NWS. The advantages of the Treaty consist in its ability substantively to restrain the capability of NWS in developing new types of nuclear arms, which in turn would lead to the further marginalization of their role. How can one expect progress in the non-proliferation regime without concrete steps in self-restraint as to the modernization of its nuclear capability? All countries, first of all nuclear, as well as non-nuclear signatories, and those which are still non-signatories to this Treaty and whose ratification is needed for its entry into force, should redouble their efforts to achieve this aim.

Ukraine took an active part in the consolidation of the non-proliferation regime and greater stability in South Asia by participating in the special task force established in summer 1999, thereby making a significant contribution to the reduction of the world's nuclear weapons arsenals.

Ukraine keeps a keen eye on the situation around the ABM Treaty. We believe that possible actions of a Party to the ABM Treaty in order to decrease the threat of a missile attack from a rogue State should not contradict its treaty obligations. We call upon the United States of America and Russia to find a mutually acceptable solution to this problem, to avoid a negative effect on START I and START II.

Regrettably, another important issue on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, namely negative security assurances (NSA) to non-nuclear-weapon States, remains far from being resolved in a manner acceptable to the majority of States. The decision entitled

(Mr. Tarasyuk, Ukraine)

"Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament", adopted at the above-mentioned NPT Review Conference in 1995, stipulates: "... further steps should be considered to assure non-nuclear-weapon States party to the Treaty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These steps could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument". In 1998 the Conference on Disarmament established an ad hoc committee to deal with the NSA issue, which held serious and in-depth discussions. The emergence of new States with nuclear weapon capability, as well as new strategic concepts and nuclear doctrines, deserves attentive consideration within this Ad Hoc Committee, which should be re-established at the Conference on Disarmament without further delay. In this regard, let me remind you of one precedent with direct relevance to NSA. In December 1994, Ukraine received national security assurances from all NWS in exchange for our decision to give up nuclear weapons and join the NPT.

To conclude on nuclear issues, I wish to mention the cooperation between Ukraine and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is determined by our national interests. It is based on a number of agreements, including the NPT and the Agreement between Ukraine and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the application of safeguards in connection with the NPT.

In addition, nuclear activities in Ukraine are effected in compliance with international norms and standards emanating from our commitments under the nuclear safety international conventions whose depositary is IAEA. Ukraine conducted substantial work last year preparing for the signing shortly of the Protocol Additional to the Safeguards Agreement in connection with the NPT.

In connection with the safety of nuclear facilities for peaceful purposes, I take the opportunity to mention the second donors conference to collect the rest of the funds for the "Shelter" project at the Chernobyl station, to be hosted by Germany and scheduled for the end of May 2000. I appeal to the Governments that you are representing to help complete this fund-raising effort.

Turning to the international instruments curbing other weapons of mass destruction, I would like to refer to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which Ukraine has ratified and in respect of which it strictly complies with its obligations. The President of Ukraine has adopted the Programme on CWC implementation for 1999-2008, involving over 20 State ministries and agencies in implementing the Convention. We should make this Convention a universal document. The increase to 131 in the number of States parties is an encouraging sign of progress.

Our country also recognizes the important role of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), highly appreciates the activity of the Ad Hoc Group of States parties to the BWC and fully supports the appeal to complete the protocol to the BWC in 2000.

Ukraine has substantially contributed to implementing the CFE Treaty. Notwithstanding our economic problems, we have implemented our commitments under this Treaty and reduced

(Mr. Tarasyuk, Ukraine)

the number of battle tanks by 1,974, armoured combat vehicles by 1,551 and combat aircraft by 550. To date, the personnel strength of the Ukrainian armed forces has also been unprecedentedly downsized, from about 800,000 in 1991 to 400,000 at present. We believe that the CFE Treaty will continue to serve as a cornerstone of European security.

In the general context of conventional arms control and confidence-building measures, I am pleased to inform you that on 2 March 2000 the Parliament of Ukraine ratified the Open Skies Treaty, thus contributing to a safer trans-Atlantic community.

I would like especially to stress the issue of international arms transfers. The policy of Ukraine in this sphere is consistent and based on the relevant decisions, in the first place, of the United Nations Security Council. Our system of export control is strict enough to exclude any unauthorized arms sales.

I spoke explicitly on this issue at the special meeting of the United Nations Security Council in September 1999. It was clearly stated that the problem lay with the legitimate end-users, who might subsequently resell the arms to rebels. I proposed then to convene a conference of the world's biggest arms producers to seek a resolution of this problem.

Notwithstanding the varying interests and the competition of States on the arms markets, efforts could and should be made to introduce some international ethics in this sphere, a universal code of conduct on arms exports, similar to the one elaborated in the European Union. This would protect the image of falsely accused arms producers and improve the general situation with arms exports control.

The greater part of the multilateral documents mentioned in my statement were negotiated by the Conference on Disarmament or its predecessors. Although the Conference is not an assembly line for producing treaties, its primary responsibility as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiation forum consists nevertheless in negotiating treaty texts or their particular elements.

Today the Conference on Disarmament faces challenges similar to other international mechanisms in this field. This requires modifications and new approaches to become more operational and effective.

One may agree that the difficult times through which the Conference is currently passing are caused mostly by unfavourable developments well outside this hall. Still, there is an impression that the Conference is too preoccupied with these developments, while more attention could be paid to finding additional reserves within the Conference mechanism itself.

Work in the established subsidiary bodies of the Conference on Disarmament until the fulfilment of their mandates, majority voting and new broader formats of consultations could change things for the better.

(Mr. Tarasyuk, Ukraine)

The second dimension of the disarmament process that I mentioned before should remain with the United Nations. As a member of the United Nations Security Council for the years 2000-2001 and as a country that remembers the horrors of two world wars, the pain of Chernobyl and the Soviet nuclear legacy, Ukraine will strive to promote the disarmament process within this universal organization. In this regard, paramount importance attaches to the reform of the United Nations Security Council through the enlargement of its membership, review of the veto procedures and the delegation of more powers to the non-permanent members.

Moreover, Ukraine is ready to support the involvement of the Security Council in the process of the codification of international trade in small arms and control over the illegal trafficking of such weapons. The Security Council is to play a leading role in solving the problems of non-proliferation, nuclear test ban and guarantees of security to non-nuclear and threshold States.

What is most important, however, is once again the political will of the leading world powers - permanent members of the Security Council - to seek a common platform for the future of disarmament and for the future of indivisible international security.

Politicians ought to become more responsible to the people and less vulnerable to military lobby influence. They should also learn to sacrifice the national interests of their respective States for the sake of universal human interests. Actually, there will be no sacrifices, if all work together for common objectives.

In conclusion, let me wish you success in your noble and responsible task of making our planet a safer place to live, a place with fewer arms and more stability and peace.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for his important statement and for the warm words addressed to me and to my country, Bangladesh.

I have much pleasure now in inviting the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr. Knut Vollebaek, to address the Conference. Mr. Minister, you have the floor.

Mr. VOLLEBAEK (Norway): May I join previous speakers in congratulating the women here in the Conference on Disarmament and representatives of the women's organizations present in this hall on the occasion of International Women's Day yesterday. Looking around in the hall, I can understand why the representative of the Netherlands chose the quotation from Joseph Conrad, but at the same time, I would like to remind us all and point to the very important work that specifically women have successfully carried out to put pressure on men to further the process of disarmament, cross-regionally and informally.

Let me also thank you, Ambassador Chowdhury, for all that you have been doing and still are doing in assisting the Conference in its efforts to reach agreement on a programme of work. That is very important.

(Mr. Vollebaek, Norway)

Over the last decade the world has undergone dramatic political, economic and social upheavals - in many ways the political map has been redrawn. During the last five years, however, progress in disarmament has been slow, although there have been some significant breakthroughs. On the threshold of this new millennium, what could be more worth while than to make a fresh commitment to substantial disarmament and arms control?

So what are our challenges?

First of all, I sincerely hope that Ambassador Chowdhury's efforts will lead to an agreement on a programme of work which will enable this Conference to embark on real negotiations and discussions on important substantive issues.

We believe that the Conference on Disarmament must retain its role as a major disarmament forum. We have been disappointed by the lack of progress on many issues over the last couple of years. We need to avoid the impression that the Conference is becoming sidelined. I hope therefore that we can now join forces to ensure the effective operation of this body with a view to achieving concrete results.

The current situation is making great demands on the non-proliferation regime. Our efforts to revitalize nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must now be intensified and be incorporated into the foreign and security policy priorities of all countries.

At the forthcoming NPT Review Conference, the challenge will be to find ways and means to translate the agreed principles and objectives for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation into concrete action. Another challenge will be to develop new measures and initiatives that all parties can endorse. This Conference should spur us on to achieve concrete and lasting results in this regard.

The decision of the 1995 NPT Review Conference to extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty indefinitely is a milestone in the efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. And this decision was made contingent on two other, equally important decisions.

The parties committed themselves to pursuing several specific principles and objectives that will promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. A crucial part of this commitment was the establishment of a strengthened review process. The review process was to be responsible for discussing how nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation can best be attained and what new measures and initiatives should be developed.

We must acknowledge, however, that the review process for the NPT has not functioned as well as we had hoped. This is partly due to underlying political realities and disagreement on a number of issues. In my view, we have not been willing to take on the responsibility for finding viable solutions on which everyone could agree.

In order to maintain the credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, we must revitalize the review process. We must give new momentum to this work. Practicable arrangements must be

(Mr. Vollebaek, Norway)

developed. We must minimize the possibility of setbacks. At the same time, we must promote the implementation of decisions adopted by the review conferences. A thorough assessment of the review process is called for. Initiatives that can help get such an assessment started should be tabled at the conference.

I would like to suggest three elements that could be incorporated into a strategy for revitalizing the review process.

First, it is important to preserve the integrity of the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted at the 1995 Review Conference. They are not up for renegotiation. Most of them have not yet been realized, with a few notable exceptions, such as the completion of the negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the IAEA additional protocol on full scope safeguards.

Second, the review process needs a mechanism that can help to transform principles and objectives into action by facilitating their implementation. A programme of action for the review process would serve such a purpose.

In addition to containing objectives that have not been realized, such a programme could include new measures and initiatives. Under a programme of action, the parties would be mandated to follow up and develop the decisions by the Review Conference for the period leading up to the next review conference.

To make this possible, each of the annual meetings of the review process should deal with a limited number of well-defined issues with a view to achieving results. The parties should undertake to deal with and further develop issues defined in a programme of action. Such a programme of action could include:

- (a) Negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes;
- (b) The entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
- (c) Reviewing information on strategic nuclear arms reductions, including the START process;
- (d) Transparency in relation to tactical nuclear weapons and the destruction of such weapons;
- (e) The signing and ratification of the new IAEA additional protocol on full scope safeguards;
- (f) Negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States that are parties to the NPT.

(Mr. Vollebaek, Norway)

In addition, a certain part of each annual meeting should be set aside for a focused review.

Third, the review process should be extended from three to four sessions, in order to combine implementation of decisions with preparations for subsequent review conferences. This would enhance the effectiveness of the process and the prospect of achieving concrete results.

If we are to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the scope of our efforts must be wide enough to include the underlying causes of conflict and war - the most important force driving proliferation.

Thus, it is important to address regional issues in the context of non-proliferation and disarmament. The nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan in 1998 highlighted the connection between regional instability and the danger of nuclear proliferation.

The multilateral dialogue should be used to build confidence and underline that weapons of mass destruction neither protect nor promote national interests.

The security situation in the Middle East is the only regional issue addressed by the NPT to date. South Asia also gives cause for concern, however. It is important that India and Pakistan develop confidence-building measures, as provided for in the Lahore Declaration of 1999, in order to reduce tension and prevent further conflict escalation. Such measures could be followed up by consultations on elements that could be included in a separate arms control regime for the region. The nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan should serve as a strong reminder that these two countries cannot afford to allow their differences to get out of hand. Conventional conflict could contain the seeds of a larger conflagration.

We believe that the NPT should deal with regional issues in a more balanced and comprehensive way. The forthcoming Review Conference could look at a package of regional issues to be dealt with at the annual meetings. In addition to the Middle East, such a package should include South Asia and the Far East, with an emphasis on North Korea. It should also include individual countries whose status is somewhat unclear, such as Iraq. In this way, a broader regional emphasis would contribute to a more coherent strategy that would enable us to deal more forcefully with existing challenges.

I would now like to comment briefly on some of the substantive NPT-related issues.

To reduce the role of nuclear weapons, Russia and the United States must continue their efforts further to reduce their strategic arsenals. Negotiations on START III should begin as soon as possible. New strategic arms control initiatives should also be implemented. This includes the measures relating to the transparency of strategic nuclear warhead inventories, agreed on by Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin at the summit in Helsinki in 1997. Such initiatives would be an important signal that the nuclear-weapon States take their responsibility for disarmament seriously.

(Mr. Vollebaek, Norway)

The issue of tactical nuclear weapons should be given more focused attention. These weapons must not fall into the wrong hands and should therefore be subject to extensive safeguards and control. Such weapons can be rapidly redeployed and can play a destabilizing role in areas of conflict. The handling and reduction of such weapons should be part of a more comprehensive disarmament process.

Increased transparency with regard to tactical nuclear weapons could be a first step, and would be an important confidence-building measure.

The next step could be the development of a programme for warhead destruction underpinned by bilateral verification procedures. The United States and Russian declaration of 1991 to withdraw and eliminate tactical nuclear weapons is important in this respect and should be reconfirmed and provided with a time-frame for implementation.

Norway has always held the view that reductions in nuclear weapons, and ultimately their total elimination, cannot be negotiated in a multilateral forum. The nuclear-weapon States have a particular responsibility for nuclear disarmament. Given the devastating effect of these weapons, however, the international community has a legitimate interest in being kept informed of the progress achieved. We should also be informed of any difficulties and challenges encountered in the nuclear disarmament process.

Norway has on several occasions advocated that the Conference on Disarmament should serve as an important forum on nuclear transparency in order to replace distrust with confidence and cooperation. A procedure for nuclear transparency in the Conference on Disarmament could give the nuclear-weapon States an opportunity to inform others both of the results achieved through unilateral and bilateral initiatives and of their nuclear policies. This would demonstrate their commitment to nuclear disarmament.

In this spirit, we submitted, together with Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, a proposal last year to establish an ad hoc working group to study ways and means of establishing an exchange of information and views on efforts towards nuclear disarmament. This proposal has been widely accepted by the members of this Conference. My appeal to you today is that we now translate this support into action.

Today there are large amounts of weapons-grade plutonium and highly enriched uranium that pose a serious problem in terms of safe and secure handling. Because of inadequate arrangements for the control and verification of such material, they represent a threat to global security. This state of affairs is having a negative impact on the nuclear disarmament process.

To ensure further and irreversible reductions in nuclear weapons arsenals, international assurances should be given that weapon-grade fissile material is no longer being produced. Assurances should also be provided that existing stockpiles are being brought properly under control with a view to net reductions. We therefore need a coherent strategy to develop an international framework for dealing with fissile material. Such a strategy should include four elements.

(Mr. Vollebaek, Norway)

First, a ban on the future production of fissile material for weapons purposes is essential. Such a ban should be considered an integral and indispensable part of nuclear disarmament. I am very disappointed to see that the Conference on Disarmament has still not started negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), although there has been consensus on the importance and high priority of this issue for a long time.

Second, the amount of weapons-usable fissile material that is now surplus or in excess of military requirements is steadily increasing and represents a proliferation risk. We need to establish an international norm for States to deal with stockpiles of such material, in order to ensure that none of these stocks will be returned or diverted to weapon programmes. This norm would also ensure that the stocks are made secure from theft and sabotage and prevent harm to human health and the environment.

Third, highly enriched uranium produced for non-explosive purposes, such as fuel for the propulsion of naval reactors, also involves a risk of proliferation. This issue should be addressed by the international community with a view to improving safety and the control of such material.

Fourth, we believe in establishing voluntary measures that would increase transparency in relation to military inventories of fissile material. Norway has put forward a four-step proposal for increasing transparency and confidence-building measures for such holdings, through reporting, inspection and safeguard procedures. This would lead to agreed, monitored net reductions in these stockpiles.

The issues of stockpiles related to excess weapons material, highly enriched uranium for non-explosive purposes and military inventories should be included in an international process to be established in parallel with or independent of the FMCT negotiations in Geneva.

I would like once again to emphasize the success of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines. The process leading up to the Convention and its implementation is an example of the benefit to be gained from combining experience from practical work in the field with multilateral diplomacy. I am pleased to see that the Geneva communities have played a key part in this process. Geneva has, in consequence, become an international home for the Convention. The inter-sessional work of the Convention is taking place here, and the second meeting of States parties will be held here in September.

As a result of the work on the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines, more attention is being given to conventional weapons in general. Conventional disarmament is also important in safeguarding humanitarian and human rights concerns. Conventional weapons are the weapons that kill. More focus on these weapons reflects an increasing willingness to improve human security.

Last week the first preparatory meeting of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects took place in New York. This Conference will supplement the efforts and initiatives being made at the national and regional

(Mr. Vollebaek, Norway)

levels. The first preparatory meeting was a disappointment, however. This may be an indication that the small arms issue is still not ripe for a global approach. The issue is a complex one and must be approached in a practical, pragmatic and realistic manner.

The Conference on Disarmament is in urgent need of reform. I am not suggesting that the present stalemate could have been prevented by a reform of the Conference. No organizational or procedural operations can change underlying political realities.

Certain political requirements should be met if the Conference is to play a crucial role in the years ahead. And the removal of certain procedural obstacles could help this forum operate more smoothly.

In our view, the further enlargement of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament continues to be imperative. The admittance of Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia as members last year was a most welcome, but still very small step forward.

We have long held the view that any country wishing to become a member should be admitted. We cannot exclude others from what is frequently referred to as the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. If we want to negotiate in the Conference on Disarmament with a view to universal application and adherence, we have to open up for universal participation, as we do in other multilateral forums.

The current rules of procedure and working methods have become obstacles to the proper functioning of the Conference. Any subsidiary body must be able to work until its task has been accomplished. It is equally difficult to see the justification for the consensus rule across the board. The removal of the consensus rule should be considered, at least for procedural matters. The adoption of the same agenda year after year following protracted negotiations adds to the image of the Conference on Disarmament as an institution that is unable to adapt to new realities and matters of real concern.

The Conference is now in its fourth year without having done any substantive work. Multilateral institutions are faced with an increasing scarcity of resources. This is a development Norway regrets - our commitment to multilateralism is strong. Many problems can only be dealt with at the multilateral level, especially as globalization proceeds.

But all countries will have to consider more and more carefully how resources are spent. This will also apply to the Conference on Disarmament. Questions will be asked whether money can be spent more wisely and issues dealt with more efficiently elsewhere.

We are living in a world that is undergoing dramatic changes and where more and more importance is being attached to the way we deal with security issues. Future security will depend on a combination of carefully balanced regional and global initiatives and measures. It will also depend on our continuing international cooperation in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

(Mr. Vollebaek, Norway)

Today the non-proliferation regime is under pressure for several reasons. We must use the forthcoming NPT Review Conference to rededicate ourselves to the commitments of 1995 and to a concrete programme of action for the coming years.

We are determined to do our utmost to maintain what we have already achieved. We are looking forward to the further strengthening of the non-proliferation regime also as a means towards eventual nuclear disarmament. We are equally committed to making the Conference on Disarmament an effective instrument geared to achieving concrete results. To do this we need reforms. Together, we must take these necessary steps if we are to enhance international security and stability.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway for his important statement and for his kind words of appreciation addressed to me.

As we are aware, Ambassador Erwin Hofer of Switzerland will soon leave this Conference, having been called to other important responsibilities by his Government. During his presidency of the Conference in February/March 1998, he was able to create a solid foundation for the decision taken by the Conference on its programme of work. He can also take pride in the fact that his strenuous efforts as Special Coordinator on the Expansion of the Membership of the Conference, and his quiet but efficient diplomacy, resulted in the decision taken by the Conference in August 1999 to admit five new members. I am sure you all join me in extending to him and his family our best wishes for the future. Ambassador Hofer, you have the floor.

Mr. HOFER (Switzerland) (translated from French): First of all, may I congratulate you on your assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. This is a particularly difficult task given the present circumstances. You have taken up your responsibilities in a remarkable fashion, thanks to those diplomatic skills so well known to all of us here in international Geneva.

This is the first time under your presidency and the last time in my current position that I speak as Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament and I am deeply honoured to do so after the statements of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Norway, with whom we have developed very close ties, and Ukraine, who holds a key position in terms of European security. These two statements, as well as the messages that have just been expressed on the occasion of International Women's Day, show the importance that the international community attaches to the Conference.

As I leave my post, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all those men and women who have supported me in my functions since February 1996. My thanks go to those colleagues and friends present in the room and also to those who have left Geneva before me. The list of persons whom I would like to thank would be too long but I would like, in particular, to express my appreciation to the delegations of Chile and South Africa, whose support was essential for Switzerland's accession in 1996 as a full member of the Conference on Disarmament. It was in this capacity that my country, together with Sweden and Syria, was part of the old Conference

(Mr. Hofer, Switzerland)

"troika" and served as President in 1998. It was that troika which, under the presidency of Syria, had succeeded in adopting an agenda, admittedly short lived, but which did contain a substantial programme of work.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and his deputy Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, as well as to their colleagues in the secretariat for their firm support of the cause of disarmament and their efforts to place the Conference finally on the path of substantive work, that is to say, negotiations.

We have not yet attained our goals but I can confidently state that, as representative of Switzerland, I have learned a great deal from this period with you. During my stay in Geneva, the Conference went through an extremely important phase with the conclusion of the negotiations of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, the CTBT.

For its part, Switzerland has been able to contribute to major advances in arms control in Geneva, in particular in relation to the Conference. Thus, in entrusting Switzerland with the task of coordinator on the expansion of its membership - the only operational outcome of the last session - the Conference is effectively seeking to expand its legitimacy. In parallel with its commitments within the Conference, Switzerland has opened two international centres in Geneva, the first on security policy, the second dealing with humanitarian mine clearance. Switzerland has put forward its candidature as host for the future body entrusted with ensuring compliance with the prohibition of biological weapons. Thanks to the concerted action of States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines, or the Ottawa Convention, an instrument of great importance in the humanitarian field and also in that of disarmament, having previously been without a home, is now anchored in Geneva. We should note also the new dimension added to the disarmament cause by the efforts to combat abuse of small arms, as Geneva is becoming one of the centres of gravity in this area.

It would not have been possible to obtain these results without the expertise and the negotiating skills that are found within this Conference. While the objectives reached in the past have favourably influenced the present, the question to be asked is: what does the future hold?

Regrettably, new negotiations have not yet begun in the Conference. The absence of a programme of work is certainly not due to any lack of commitment on the part of the presidency or the delegations. On the contrary, there is a firm will and sense of creativity among us and in this context I would highlight the efforts of Ambassador Dembri of Algeria. So far, however, this will has not been sufficient to get specific negotiations off the ground.

What then is behind the current stalemate? Its cause is undoubtedly to be found in the very nature of our work. We are facing far-reaching changes in the balance of forces and strategic constellations in a changing security environment. As diplomats, we are not in a position to transform our own zeal for negotiations into a lever that can change those realities. We are practising here the art of the possible, not the art of what is desirable. Our means of action are limited to the establishment of legal frameworks that seek, in the interest of

(Mr. Hofer, Switzerland)

humankind as a whole, to enhance the security of States or to make sure that strategic realities are more predictable and stable and pose less of a threat. In this respect, we endorse the thinking of the French writer Georges Bernanos, who asserted that we do not submit to the future: we make the future.

After benefiting considerably from the peace dividends following the cold war, the Conference must now face up to the new strategic constellations, the scope of which is still greatly underestimated. So far, these constellations have prevented the establishment of the necessary consensus for starting negotiations on a new disarmament treaty. Nonetheless, I am sure that the determination to reach consensus will prevail sooner or later. In the meantime, the Conference remains the one and only universal negotiating platform in the area of disarmament, even though its membership is still, to my regret, restrictive in nature. The Conference is also a forum for dialogue and transparency. In this context, I would refer to the very positive event related to nuclear issues that took place at the beginning of this week.

Of course, the period spent waiting and in consultations has become far too long but this has given us an opportunity to release resources for other important areas, for example, the negotiations under way to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention or the implementation of existing Conventions such as that on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines and, finally, for efforts to combat the abuse of small arms. These new stages in arms control are awaiting further impetus from all the delegations meeting here in this room.

As I leave Geneva, I am sure that I can rely on this zeal for consensus and I take this opportunity to wish you every success in your work. I have a personal stake in your success, given that my Government has now entrusted me with the post in Bern as head of the combined services of the international organizations, the United Nations and the disarmament bodies. In particular, I shall be dealing with preparations for the federal vote on Switzerland's membership of the United Nations, which will probably be held before the end of 2002. The more successful you are, the easier my own job will be, in facilitating dialogue and informing and raising awareness among the Swiss people and institutions of the achievements of the United Nations system.

Even though I will have left, I will remain close to you. Let me assure you that I will remain committed to the noble cause that you are defending here. Together with my successor, my colleagues at the Swiss Mission, the authorities of the canton and city of Geneva, we will do our very best to continue to provide for you an atmosphere conducive to positive results in the negotiations, as this is the central role of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and for the warm felicitations addressed to me. Ambassador Hofer, I know I have the Conference's consensus view when I say that you will be sorely missed.

That concludes my list of speakers for today. I see the distinguished representative of Pakistan. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): For the past several weeks in the Conference on Disarmament my delegation has considered that the best contribution we could make to the chances of the success of this Conference was to keep silent! I would, however, wish to take this opportunity to say a few words, mainly in response to some of the remarks that have been made in the Conference today regarding the dangers in South Asia. But, first, may I take this opportunity to extend my warm felicitations to you, Mr. President, and to express the confidence, which is buttressed by shared memories of compatriotism as well as professional training, that you will guide this Conference to success - at least towards a successful direction.

It is also an auspicious occasion as this Conference is observing International Women's Day. We have listened very intently to the statement from the annual International Women's Day seminar, which was read to us so eloquently by our Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky. It is the hope of my delegation that, in future, this Conference will find it possible - perhaps even in an informal mode - to listen to the representatives of the international women's community in person.

The present period is not a good time for disarmament. The reasons for this are quite evident and have been stated in several statements in this hall, including those which have been made today. There has been a deterioration in the relationships between the great Powers. There have been setbacks for disarmament, for the CTBT, for nuclear disarmament, for the ABM Treaty, and there have been setbacks in our region of South Asia. My delegation welcomes the recognition contained in the statement made by the Foreign Ministers of Ukraine and Norway today about the dangers in South Asia. In particular, I would like to express our agreement about the need for what the Foreign Minister of Norway has termed "a separate arms control regime" for South Asia.

It may be recalled that, after the nuclear explosions in South Asia last year, when nuclear arms became a reality which we felt could not be reversed but could be contained, Pakistan proposed a strategic restraint regime for South Asia. This regime envisaged three elements: first, mutual nuclear weapons and delivery systems restraint; second, mutual conventional military restraint and confidence-building measures; and third, efforts to address and resolve underlying problems, principally the core dispute between the two countries over Jammu and Kashmir. Simultaneously, it was agreed to include an item on peace and security on the agenda for the bilateral talks between India and Pakistan, as a priority issue, together with the item on Kashmir. It is unfortunate of course that this bilateral dialogue has been broken off, a nuclear doctrine has been declared envisaging a triad of nuclear weapons forces, and the defence budget of our neighbour has been increased by 28 per cent, while Pakistan's has been decreased by 6 per cent.

The Foreign Minister of Norway has suggested that the NPT Review Conference should deal with regional issues in a more comprehensive and balanced manner, and that the package of regional measures should also include South Asia. Pakistan is not opposed to the NPT Review Conference considering measures to construct what the Foreign Minister of Norway has suggested - a separate arms control regime for South Asia. But such measures, we believe, cannot be developed without the participation of the States concerned. If the NPT Review

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

Conference is to deal credibly with the situation in South Asia, it should extend an invitation to Pakistan - and equally to India - to participate fully and equally in the discussion of the issues relating to South Asia. I can state here that Pakistan would respond positively to such an invitation. We would, however, not be in a position to accept or endorse ex parte decisions by any conference or any organ in the international community.

It should be recalled that resolution 1172 (1998) of the Security Council was adopted ex parte, without our participation. The Task Force on Asia was set up - again - without our participation. The consequence of those endeavours are there for all to see: a nuclear doctrine, a triad, nuclear weapons development, military defence budgets on the increase. None of the benchmarks of resolution 1172 are anywhere near realization, and that is not because of Pakistan. I would therefore urge that our friends in the international community should not make the same mistake. We believe that the international community needs to do two things: first, to engage the two parties concerned to promote nuclear restraint, to promote conventional restraint, to promote the resolution of the disputes which threaten peace in South Asia, and, second, to urge the two States to reopen and revive their dialogue, which contains the framework within which a separate arms control regime for South Asia envisaging mutual restraint can and should be built for a peaceful future for our peoples.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Munir Akram for his statement and for the warm remarks towards me, particularly the reference to our shared experiences and recollections and our common training to be officers and gentlemen.

Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor? I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of India, Ambassador Kunadi.

Ms. KUNADI (India): Mr. President, allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to express the appreciation of my delegation in seeing you conduct our proceedings at an important juncture for the work of the Conference.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the women non-governmental organizations for the message on the occasion of International Women's Day, read out by the Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, to which we listened with great attention. We have also listened with attention to the important statements made today in the plenary by the Foreign Ministers of Norway and Ukraine.

It was not my intention to take the floor today, but I have been compelled to do so by certain unwarranted remarks made by the delegation of Pakistan relating to the national budget of India and certain other elements. Our position on regional approaches to South Asia is well known and need not be repeated here. We do not believe that South Asia as a region lends itself to regional security formations. With regard to the Indian defence budget, however, I would like to say a few words and make the following comments.

(Ms. Kunadi, India)

I believe that the performance by Pakistan's Ambassador here obviously flows from the single-point obsession with India and constitutes yet another attempt to waste the precious time of this Conference by raising extraneous issues.

I would also like briefly to state the facts for the record. India's defence budget needs to be seen in the background of our long land border and coastline, island territories and exclusive economic zones, as well as the challenge of extensive cross-border terrorism, covert destabilization activities and mercenary activities. The progressive proliferation of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons in our neighbourhood over the last decade has added a new dimension to the security challenge faced by India. India's defence expenditure is guided solely by considerations of self-defence.

The fact of the matter is that India's budget allocation for defence has remained low since the mid-1980s and has consistently declined. Currently India's defence expenditure is around 2.7 per cent of the country's GDP. This is one of the lowest in the region and beyond. It is also low in comparison to our own defence expenditure, which has been 3.3 per cent of the GDP in 1987. Moreover, research and development accounts for only 5.3 per cent of the total defence allocations. This modest budget outlay for research and development substantiates the fact that India is not engaged in any nuclear or missile arms race.

In addition, in keeping with the constitutionally established democratic practice of our country, the annual budget of the central Government for the coming financial year was presented to parliament. This is an example of the open and transparent manner in which the defence expenditure is discussed and approved in the Indian democracy. The concepts of democracy and transparency are obviously not familiar to the delegation of Pakistan.

India's defence budget is formulated with a degree of transparency that is not evident in many countries in our region and beyond. As evidenced by India's regular participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, we are committed to strengthening the norm of transparency in defence expenditures and arms transfers at the international level, and would expect the same of others.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Kunadi, an old friend, for her statement and for the support she and the Indian delegation have been rendering me in my task, which is happily drawing to a close.

I recognize the distinguished representative of Pakistan. Ambassador Akram, you have the floor.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, my first intervention was not designed as a diatribe against India. I was seeking to reflect the situation and to respond to the statements that had been made here about the dangers in South Asia. So it was not my delegation which introduced the South Asian dangers. I believe that everybody realizes that the situation in South Asia is serious. I think a repetition by our Indian colleague that South Asia is not amenable to regional approaches is not convincing. We are part of this world and we believe

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

that the situation in South Asia does need to be addressed, and that was my purpose - to try and propose an outline of what Pakistan suggests should be done, and I think we have a reasonable and responsible approach to this issue. I trust and hope that the international community will soon be able to convince the Indian Government to stop its venom and aggression against Pakistan and to come back to the path of dialogue and consultations, which is essential for the promotion of peace and security.

If India wishes to advertise its democracy, I would urge it in the first place to implement democracy and transparency in Jammu and Kashmir. Let the people of Kashmir decide their future. They do not want to stay with India. Why do you hold them in bondage? Democracy starts at home. Please apply it in Jammu and Kashmir first and foremost.

Second, my distinguished colleague has argued that India's long border is a justification for its large military expenditures and for its army being the third largest in the world. I would just like to point out that almost all of this army, 1.5 million strong, is deployed against my country, a much smaller country, and therefore obliges us to expend a large part of our national resources on defence. This is something that can be changed, that can be reversed by India, and we are proposing that we should do so through dialogue. The increase in the defence budget of India, which my colleague has described as "modest", is equal to the entire defence budget of Pakistan - just the increase. So one can judge how we see this increase, especially as we gaze at Indian guns across our borders.

The PRESIDENT: If there are no other speakers, that will conclude my list of speakers for the day. I would now go on to making my concluding remarks, but before that, may I inform the Conference that I have received a letter from Ambassador Amorim of Brazil in which he shares with me the sad news of the passing away of a former and dear colleague, Ambassador Celso Antonio de Sousa e Silva. Ambassador de Sousa e Silva was one of the pioneer members of this Conference as reconstituted in 1979 and presided over its proceedings on two occasions, in 1979 and 1986. I am sure that all of you will join me in requesting Ambassador Amorim to transmit our heartfelt condolences to the family of Ambassador de Sousa e Silva.

With the approval of the Conference, I will now make a few concluding remarks.

As I lay down the office of the President of the Conference on Disarmament, I wonder if the brevity of its term does not also impede its effective discharge. For the incumbent, it certainly does compound the overall sense of intensity, and hence there is always a modicum of relief associated with its relinquishment, which is what I feel now.

Nonetheless the experience is stimulating, even exhilarating and also, I must add, enlightening. The intricacies and nuances, of postures and positions, can never be as perceptible as from the chair. Any process of learning leaves one with some thoughts, as this one has for me, which I should like to share with my colleagues. But I should be remiss if I did not, early in my remarks, pay a tribute to all of you, my peers. Despite the variety and diversity of interests among the membership, which is but natural when the most basic concept of security is

(The President)

concerned, each one that I have interacted with has sought to assist me. This is no small comfort, for in diplomacy interests may alter but friendships must survive. More is achieved by human relationships than is often given credit for. So thank you all. I owe to my predecessor Ambassador Harald Kreid a debt for being such a generous source of encouragement and to Secretary-General Petrovsky and Deputy Secretary-General Bensmail, as well as others in the secretariat, including our interpreters, warm gratitude for their support. To my successor, the delegation of Belarus, I wish the very best and assure them of my readiness to assist them in their task.

True, my endeavours have not found fruition in a programme of work. But you will recall that at the outset I had set myself modest goals. My aim has always been to point the way to our purpose, and to suggest a "step-by-step, brick-by-brick" approach to that end. In fact, the initiative which I circulated was designed to achieve just that. As you are aware, it entailed the appointment, for a limited time frame, of two coordinators, for nuclear disarmament and PAROS, accompanied by an agreed presidential statement suggesting a course of action leading to a programme of work. It had support from many, but my initiative did not result in a consensus. Views on it were shaped by perceived national self-interest, as indeed should be the case on it, a fact that I understand and respect. The chair can have no position of its own, but can only seek to try for convergence.

The result, however, is that we are back in the tunnel and the light at its end eludes us, although we know that it is there. Indeed, that is what had prompted my predecessors and myself to strive with a determination so relentless that, beside it, the persistence of Robert Bruce pales in comparison. But we draw solace from the axiom that no effort sincerely made is ever in total futility. We can only make progress incrementally even though our work, like a Gothic cathedral, can never be quite finished, but can still serve its purpose.

Member States in the Conference on Disarmament today are often very - at times too - far apart. To attempt to close that gap, as an esteemed colleague remarked to me, is akin to seeking "a bridge too far". It has often been said the Conference reflects existing global realities. Or is it that the Conference on Disarmament is out of tune with the real world? For how can it remain inactive while wars and violence across the world continue to kill and maim on such an enormous scale? How can it remain so silent in the humbling knowledge that over half a billion people in the world, who live on less than a dollar a day, spend it not only on food, clothing and shelter but also to buy guns and shells? How can it be at ease when a plethora of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear and conventional, remain as potentials for our total annihilation? It is not that we are marching to a different drummer; we are not marching at all, and this immobility could, though I hope not, be at a horrendous price.

To the leaders of the world, therefore, let us make an ardent and fervent appeal. They should focus on the Conference on Disarmament, pay it more attention, in order to encourage, enthuse and energize us. Countries and peoples need this body. It must be more appropriately used. It has already demonstrated its capacity to function as a negotiating body in the not-so-distant past. I welcome the calls made today by the Ministers of Ukraine and Norway in this regard.

(The President)

For instance, the CTBT is an outcome of our work here. It gives me much pleasure to announce today that my own country, Bangladesh, which was one of its earliest signatories, has now formally ratified it.

There will always be aggression in human nature. There always has been. But the challenge before us is to tame these streaks and strains in us, to channel them away from being the cause of death and destruction, to transform them into a driving force for progress and prosperity. It is possible. It will never be an ideal world, but it can be made more liveable, more secure and more stable. A forum such as this, fashioned by our positive instincts and more humane values, can, and must, help. I thank you.

This concludes our business for today. If there are no other speakers, I shall adjourn the session. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 14 March 2000, at 10 a.m., under the presidency of Belarus.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.846
14 March 2000

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Tuesday, 14 March 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Syargei Mikhnevich

(Belarus)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 846th plenary meeting of the Conference.

As you are aware, the head of our delegation, the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sergei Martynov, cannot be with us today owing to other pressing matters and he has requested me to preside over this plenary meeting, the first during the term of office of Belarus. Ambassador Martynov will have the opportunity at the next plenary meeting to give his view of the processes under way in the Conference and to make some opening remarks.

I should like, however, to say how grateful we are to Ambassador Chowdhury of Bangladesh for his untiring efforts over the last four weeks to ensure that the Conference embarked on its substantive work. It goes without saying that, during its presidency of the Conference, our delegation will build on the work of our predecessors, and I am sure that we can count on the cooperation and support of all delegations in the discharge of our responsibilities.

There is no speaker inscribed on my list for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

There being none, this concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 23 March 2000, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.